

MODERN DRUMMER®

The World's First International Magazine For Drummers



OCTOBER

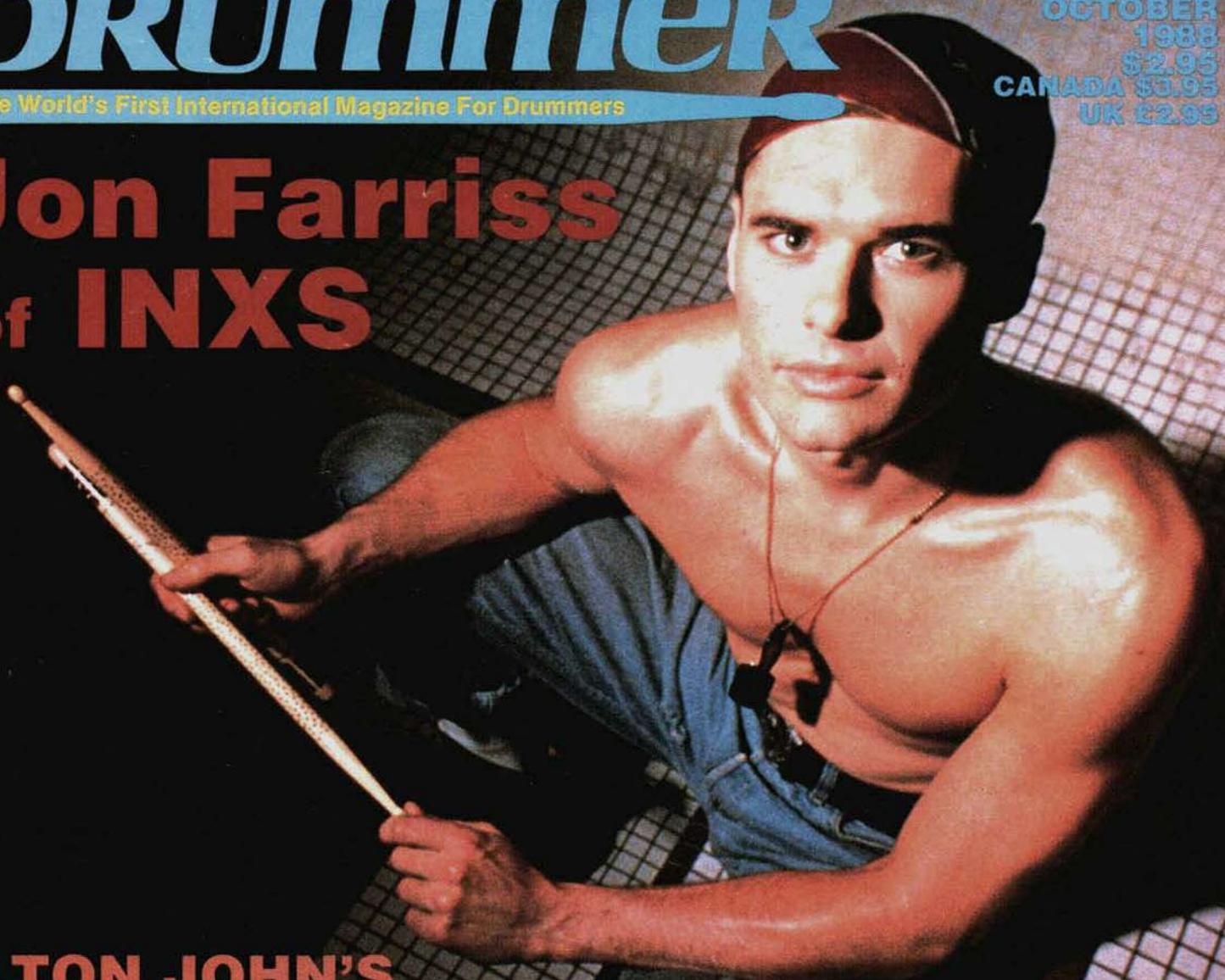
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Jon Farriss of INXS

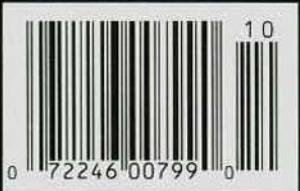


ELTON JOHN'S
Charlie Morgan

Albert Bouchard

Inside UFIP Cymbals

Plus: Omar Hakim: Style & Analysis
● Piccolo Snares ● Choosing a Mic'
● Alan White's "Rhythm of Love"
● More Power Fills



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Toby Francis

- Toby Francis Sound Engineer, Aerosmith



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JON FARRISS

As the drummer for the popular Australian group INXS, Jon Farriss is more concerned with groove than flash, and he is a master at using electronics to enhance his sound.

by Teri Saccone

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CHARLIE MORGAN

Well-known in the London studios for many years, Charlie Morgan became visible to the public as a result of his recording and live work with Elton John. He discusses the demands of the studio and recalls memorable sessions.

by Simon Goodwin

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ALBERT BOUCHARD

His drumming with Blue Oyster Cult helped define the heavy metal style, but these days, Albert Bouchard is as likely to be writing or producing as he is to be playing drums. Here, he traces his career and offers numerous tips about hard rock drumming.

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Since 1929, a small group of craftsmen have been producing cymbals in a small town in Italy. We visit the factory for a look at the U.F.I.P. manufacturing process and to learn the history of Italian cymbal making.

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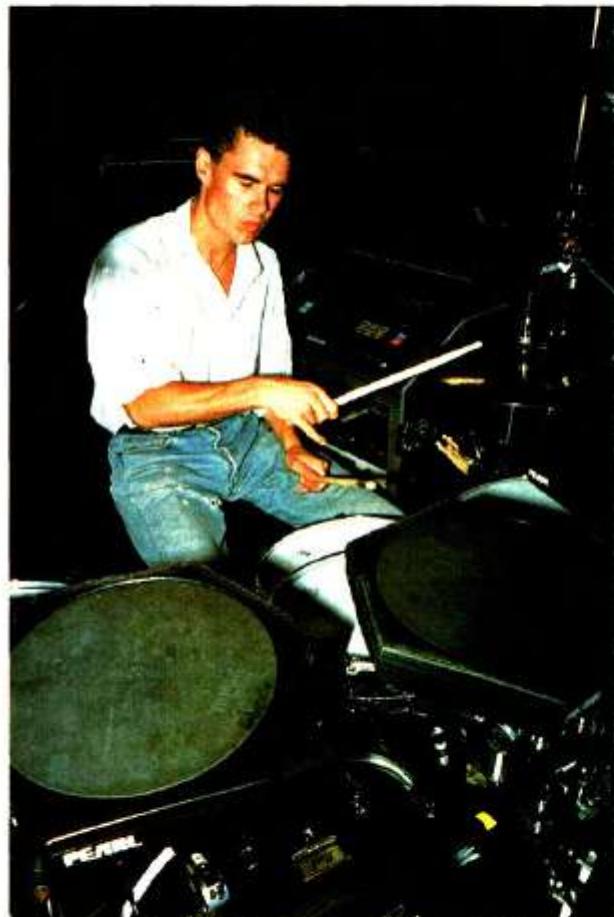


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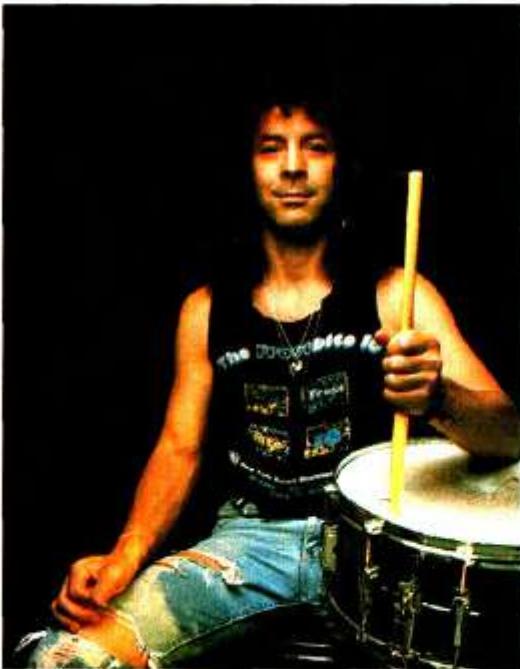


Photo by Michael P. McLaughlin

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Essential Input

Reader input is something I've commented on in this column several times over the years. It's a matter of such great importance that it always bears repeating.

The success of any special-interest publication hinges on how thoroughly it serves its readership. Staying abreast of the needs and wants of readers is something magazine editors must deal with on a daily basis. Keeping up on trends in the drum world and searching out players who are making contributions we feel you should know more about is a big part of the job.

The input you supply is given greater consideration than you might think. How a reader actually feels about a magazine is very important to the people who put it together month after month. Reader input keeps us attuned to new areas of interest, supplies us with specific column ideas, and alerts us to areas where we've tended to lean too heavily, or perhaps not enough.

The point is simple: It's essential that we continue to hear from you as often as you care to write. Though time prevents us from responding personally to everyone, rest assured that every letter is read. Many of the ideas expressed in your letters are given careful consideration at monthly editorial planning meetings.

What exactly do we want to know? Well, everything really! Are there any artists you'd like to read about who haven't been covered in MD? Is there some particular facet of drumming you'd

like to see dealt with in greater depth? Are you learning something from MD's interviews and column departments—ideas that are helping you achieve your personal goals as a player? If so, tell us what seems to be working well. If not, where do you feel things might be improved? Is there something specific you'd like to see more of in MD? Or less of? Many feature stories have been assigned, and many new departments introduced, as a result of readers who have expressed a sincere need for more in-depth information.

What about the look of MD? Here again, let us know what you like or don't like. The manner in which the magazine is received from a graphic standpoint is of great importance to us. And truthfully, we'll never know what appeals to you and what doesn't unless you take the time to tell us about it.

Open communication is the essential ingredient necessary for us to continually deliver the type of magazine you want and need. *Modern Drummer* was conceived and designed to help you in your effort to be a better drummer. We try to do that by making MD as informative, educational, and entertaining as we possibly can each month. We may not be all those things for every reader 12 times each year, but if we fail more often than we succeed, then we're simply missing the mark. And you're the only one who can supply us with the answers. I look forward to hearing from you.

RS

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Premier APK . . . the name started as an abbreviation in the engineering department, not as a slogan in the ad department.

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READERS' PLATFORM

TAMA RESPONDS

Editor's note: A Tama advertisement featuring Lars Ulrich ran in the March '88 issue of MD, and generated quite a bit of controversy. Several responses from readers were printed in the Readers' Platform departments of the June and July issues, and several more were forwarded directly to Tama. Many readers objected to the negative impression they felt the ad gave in regard to drummers in general. Some felt that MD demonstrated poor judgment in allowing the ad to run at all. Since we presented these opinions in Readers' Platform, we deemed it fair that Tama be allowed to present its own comments regarding the ad.

The strong feelings, both positive and negative, generated by our Lars Ulrich ad in *Modern Drummer* deserve a response by our company. We have been asked by Lars Ulrich and his management to also represent their views, as the strenuous demands of Metallica's production and touring schedule would delay their own correspondence.

Let's first clear *Modern Drummer* of culpability in any part of this advertisement. Due to complications in our production schedule, this ad was forwarded directly to the printer without time for review by the *MD* staff. As the originally scheduled ad was one of entirely different content, *MD* cannot be faulted for not instituting any form of censorship.

We do thank all those who took the time to write both *MD* and us about their reactions to this ad. Part of the positive response to the piece took the form of requests—which numbered in the thousands—for the poster reproduction of this ad. No other Tama poster repro to date has drawn this kind of interest. For those of you whose reactions were less than favorable, we respect your opinions, and your input

has been seriously considered and noted. Our intention is not to change deeply held views, but to show that the creation of this ad was not done for capricious or cavalier reasons. It certainly was not to promote the use of drugs or alcohol, or to portray all drummers as coarse, unthinking individuals. Our apologies to those who interpreted it in this fashion or felt that that was the end result.

This ad should be seen in light of the other ads Tama has presented. While we don't deny having engendered controversy when the subject warranted, a careful review of our many advertising contributions will show advertising that was not only informative and well within the bounds of good taste, but was also honest to the artist presented. In previous cases, Tama's commitment to portray the artist and his or her own personality and views in a suitable environment with suitable prose has caused no problem for anyone. It may have even—dare we say it—bored some.

The Lars Ulrich ad was a product of this commitment to honest artist presentation combined with the policies of Lars Ulrich's management and his own views. The ad copy that is covered by Lars Ulrich's handwriting was the original concept and writing of that ad. Our material was rejected by Lars and his management as not being an honest representation of Metallica or Lars Ulrich. We agreed with this and used the colorful (off-color to some) writing that was conceived and handwritten by Lars Ulrich himself. We did no editing and no laundering other than the word blackouts. To stir controversy was not our intention; if that were so, the ad's original copy would have been far different.

A great amount of "metal" music is exuberantly rebellious, loud, often deliberately alienating, and even "confrontational." An important part of the attraction of this mu-

sic is the fact that it presents characteristics that are less than inviting to many. To try to tame or domesticate this or make it out to be something else, especially when that would conflict with the view of the performer, is not being fair or honest—to anyone! (For those who wrote that this ad was an inaccurate portrayal, we invite you to inspect Metallica's 1987 Tour Book.)

We have seriously considered everyone's opinion, and, as the opinions of the drum community are very important to us, these views will not be without influence in future presentations. However, we do reserve the right to express ourselves, our artists' personalities, and our products in ways we feel do them the most justice. We acknowledge that this may conflict with the tastes and convictions of some *Modern Drummer* readers, but we feel that the accurate representation of the many, very different facets of the drum world is of paramount importance.

After all, isn't the existence of all these differences, varying shades of styles, opinions, and beliefs what makes the drumming world such an exciting thing to be a part of? Wouldn't it be dull if it were otherwise?

Joseph Hibbs

National Sales And Marketing Manager
Tama Drums
Bensalem PA

ON TAPE REBUTTAL

My initial comment towards Ms. Jany Sabins' review of my video [On Tape, August '88 *MD*] was, "Why would such a quality, literate magazine as *Modern Drummer* allow an obviously unknowable person to do a review, and then print it?" A lot of people tend to believe the printed word; I think *Modern Drummer* could be losing its credibility if they continue this

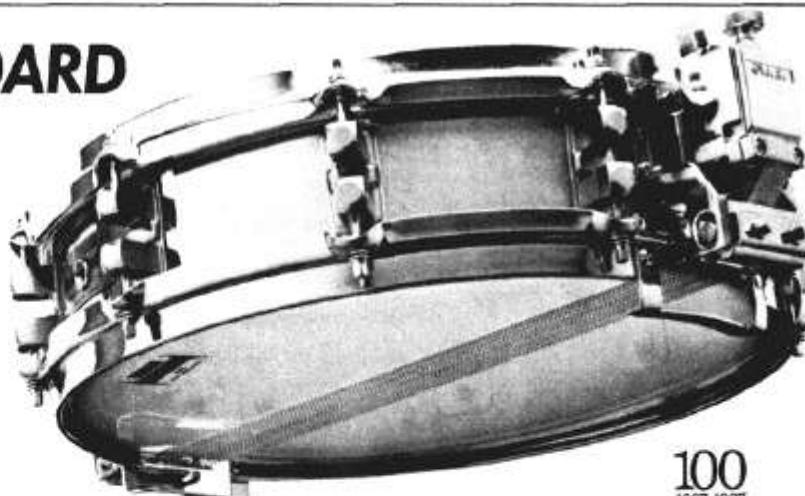
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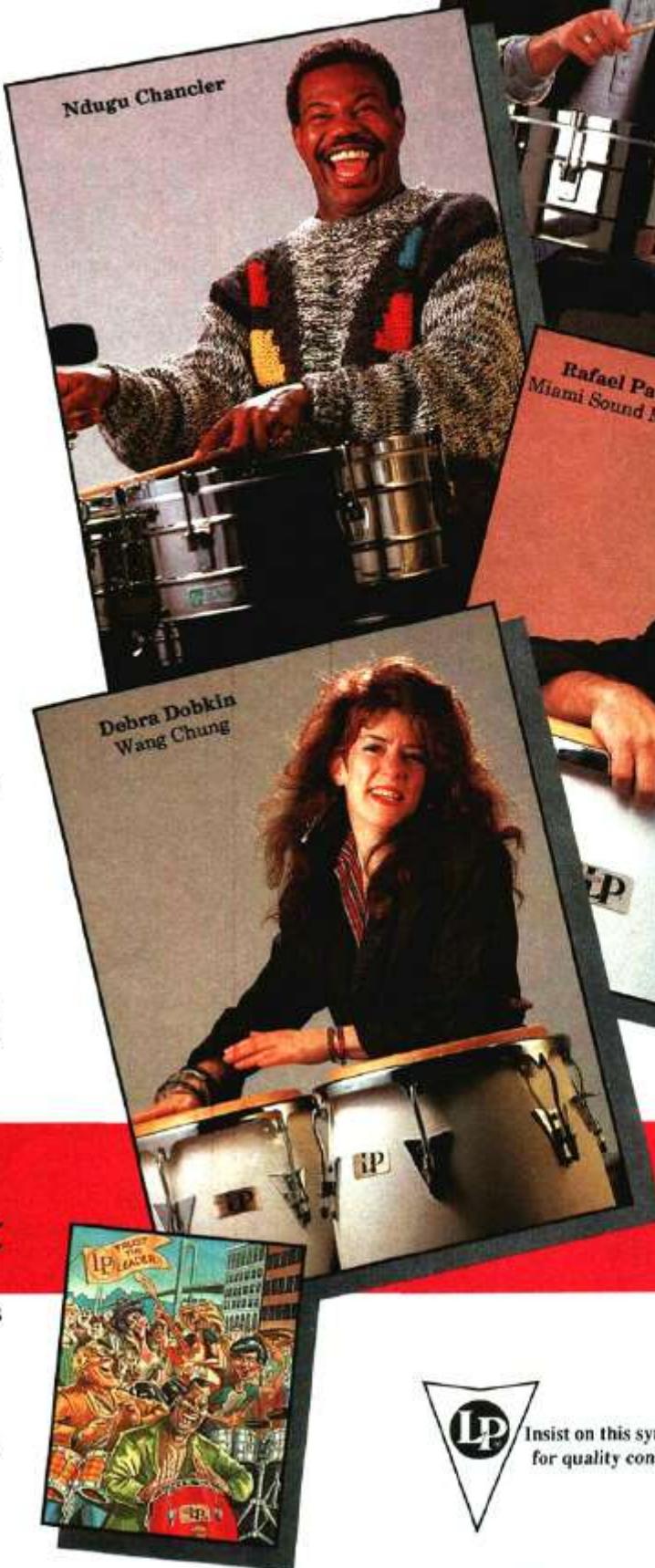
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Gary Husband

Early November '87 saw Gary Husband in America, making plans to settle, when he received a call from Mark King of Level 42, inviting him to join the band. Gary said that he couldn't, because he was involved in a tour with Allan Holdsworth that would take him up to Christmas. "Okay," said Mark. "We can get somebody to fill in for the rest of the year. But after January the first...?" "I'd love to!" said Gary.

With all the drummers who might have been suitable for Level 42—many of whom offered their services when it was known that Phil Gould was leaving—what prompted Mark to make that trans-Atlantic call to Gary? "Well," says Gary, "he told me that he had seen some of my early gigs in London with Allan Holdsworth's I.O.U. around 1980, and that he'd been following the band and buying all the albums ever since. In fact, I had been approached by Level 42 about two years earlier, but on that occasion Phil didn't leave after all, so nothing came of it. Last year, Mark thought of me again, which is great. I actually think that it was quite courageous of Mark to hire me over the phone, even more so to hire my old friend Steve Topping, the guitarist, *unheard on* my recommendation. It shows tremendous faith in me. It's flattering, and a great way to start a working relationship."

Gary has a reputation as a great spontaneous and creative player, and yet he has replaced one of the great "groove" players. It's an obvious point, and one that Gary has discussed before. "Yeah, that was something that I thought was a little strange when I was first approached; but after listening to the tapes of gigs that I've done with Level, the band is actually a lot *simpler* now than it was. Phil is essentially a groove player, but he would play around a lot as well. He'd found this rapport with Mark, which meant that they could "push and pull" with each other a lot. By comparison, I'm playing a hell

of a lot *less* than he did. The drum parts that Phil played have to be respected by me insofar as making sure that the thing is recognizable as the same piece, but there has been no pressure on me to recreate what Phil did. In fact, I've been told that I can do whatever I want. I think that Level 42 is lighter than Allan's band. *That* is the heaviest thing that I've done to date in terms of power and volume. That was "go for it time"; there was more of a dynamic margin, but it's a different style."

The summer of '88 for Gary is being spent near Nice, in southern France, recording a new album for release in September. "Then will come all the promotional work," continues Gary, "which, in a sense, will introduce the new band. Up until now it has really been a continuation of the old lineup, because we've been doing established material. But with a new album and new material, we'll be taking on a new character. I'm very excited and pleased about the way things are turning out."

—Simon Goodwin

Benny Lee Staples



"What happened to all the fast bands?" queries the Woodentops' Benny Lee Staples. And from his vantage point, flailing on his drumset at breakneck speed, one can certainly see where the question is coming from. "I think it's just natural. We all get pretty nervous before we go on stage—that's the first thing," jokes the native New Zealander. "We just did a

show in D.C. where it was the third encore, and we were really tired. I introduced the song way too fast, but everybody just started playing at that speed. I'm trying to signal, 'Stop, stop!' But it was too late; they just kept going."

But speed is barely all there is to Staples and the rest of the 'Tops: As one of the more individual-sounding bands to emerge lately, they've taken today's technology, yesterday's soul, and their own fine songwriting and created (especially live) what sounds like one big percussive explosion. Staples credits James Brown as a big influence on not only the Woodentops' sound, but on much of what's happening on the English scene today. "James Brown was a drummer himself," explains Staples, "and he always told the drummers what to play. In the early '70s he discovered that if he could have the horns and guitars do the same things as the drum parts, he could get the most incredible rhythms. His LP *In The Jungle Groove* has got the track "Funky Drummer" on it, and it's just this *incredible* drumming. That is the beat that everybody has been sampling or copying lately; in London it's just really huge. Now it seems that you can't have a dance record without a James Brown scream on it."

The Woodentops have more on their minds than merely recreating early American funk, though, as the gushing press response to their earlier records and to their latest album, *Wooden Foot Cops On The Highway*, has been quick to point out. And Staples' methods and style reflect the band's uniqueness. His array of electronic drums (where just about any sound, including his own sampled acoustic drums, is likely to pop up), the conspicuous lack of cymbals, and his standup style of dance-drumming all add up to quite a different sight and sound. "For me, cymbals kind of hang over and cloud a lot of the frequencies that can be used for other instruments, and they can be really cliché—roll off the toms and hit 50 million cymbals,

what's the point? The standup thing started a few years ago. I always want to dance, and I'm too nervous to sit down, anyway. I do lose one foot, so my open hi-hat has to be on a sample, and sometimes different bass drum sounds will appear on different places in my kit. So then I can do 16ths and more complicated bass drum patterns."

Though Staples sees some problems with the legality questions regarding sampling, he is also an unabashed fan. He cites Keith LeBlanc as his favorite drummer, crediting his technique, but also his use of technology: "Keith's use of technology is seriously futuristic. The beauty of sampling is the future of it—how you can make sounds that have never been used before. I'm really thinking of the 1990's now."

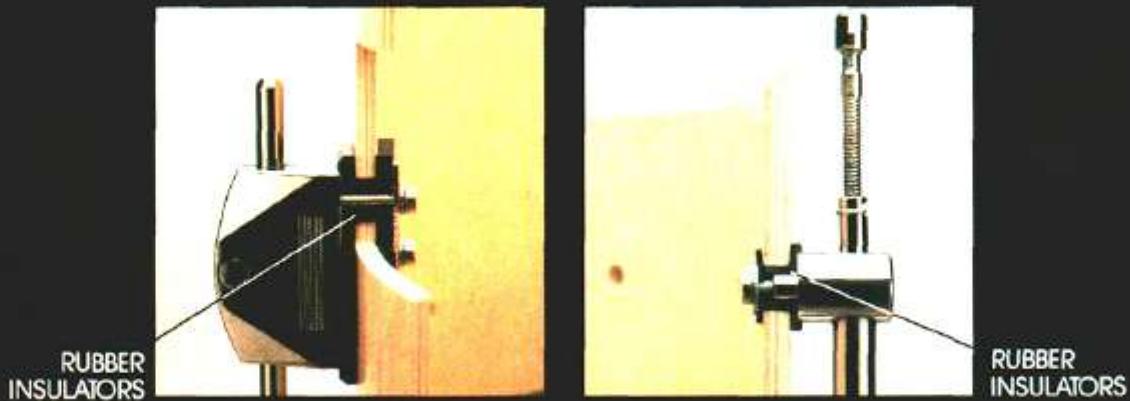
—Adam Budofsky

Manni Von Bohr

The unfortunate demise of the Jeton record label in Germany has meant that the band Bishop (originally Hammerhead) has been "put on ice." Although saddened by this setback, virtuoso German drummer Manni Von Bohr is the sort of professional who is so much in demand that new doors always open when one closes. He has renewed a working relationship with flautist Lenny MacDowell in a quartet that also includes two American musicians from Baltimore—Jimmy Welkes on guitar and Blue Savage on bass. "Lenny is very famous in Germany," says Manni. "We first performed with this lineup at The Frankfurt Music Fair in March. After that we did some "test gigs" around Germany to see what the audience reaction would be like, and it was very encouraging. Lenny has his own record label called Blue Flame, but he is trying to get one of the major companies interested. Either way, we intend to get a record out to support a tour, which is being set up in September and October."

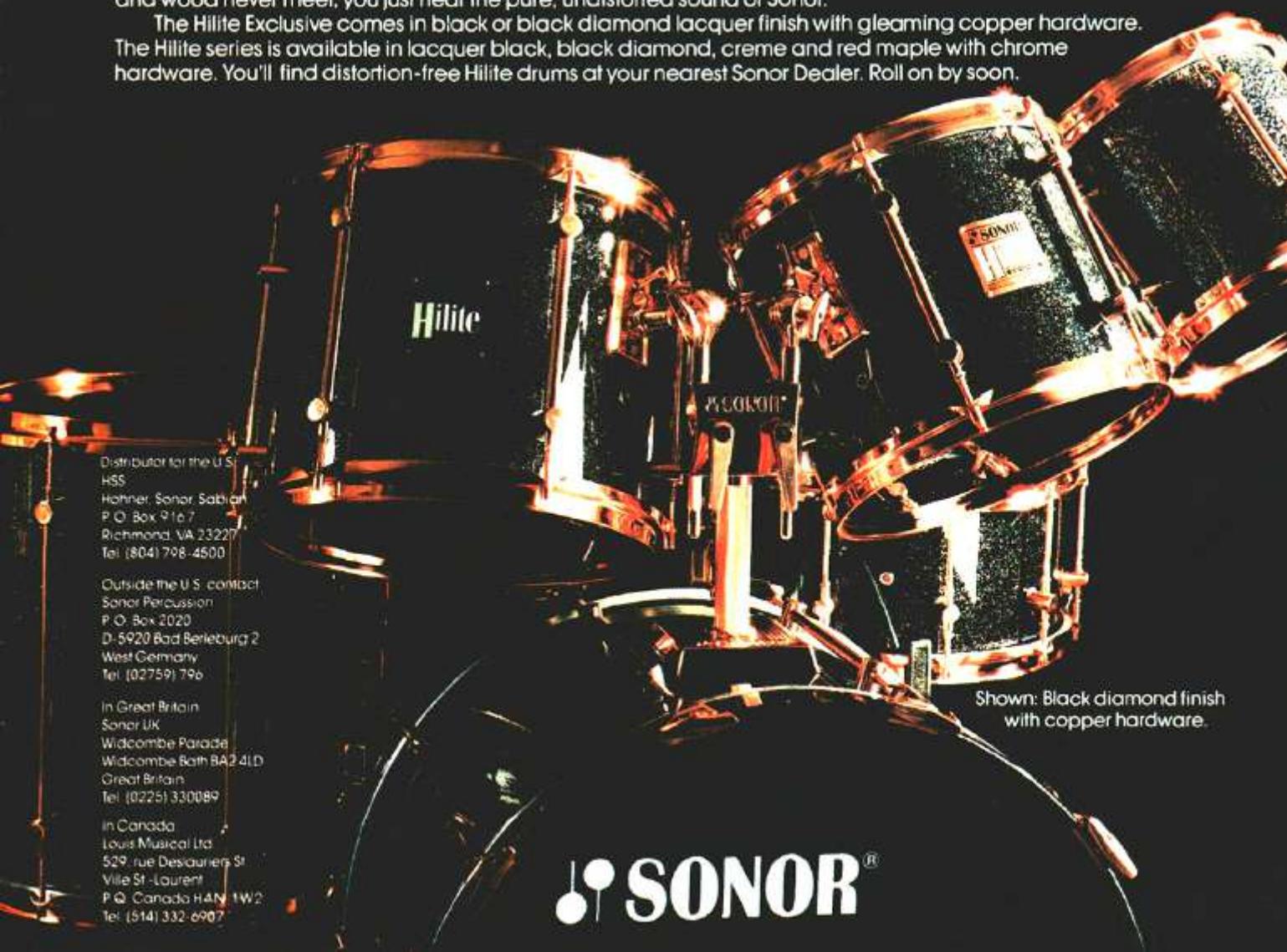
In the meantime, Manni is also touring during May and June as part of the original

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lineup of Alex Oriental Experience, which includes *Fachblatt* [German monthly music magazine] editor Horst Stachelhaus on bass. A new record is planned with this band as well. Other projects Manni is involved in include a solo venture by Wolfe Mann's backing singer, Jane Palmer, and his own solo record. "This solo record by a drummer is going to have a lot of drumming on it," laughs Manni. "I want to include drum battles with other drummers, tunes with percussion players, some bass and drum grooves, plus some ideas I have for combining acoustic drums with electronics."

With so much going on, doesn't Manni ever find conflicts within the schedules of different bands? "No, because in Germany, it's accepted that you have to play with more than one band," he explains. "There are, perhaps, ten bands who are big enough that the members make good livings playing exclusively with their particular band. These are normally the more commercial bands. Bands that are more American-oriented in style, like Lenny MacDowell or Alex, have good followings in the clubs, and that is where they make most of their money. These clubs hold anywhere up to 1,200 people, but there aren't enough of them for one band to be touring constantly. Therefore you have to look towards touring with different bands, so that when you go back to a club a couple of months later, it won't be with the same band. From a recording point of view, one of them might do very well, maybe both, maybe neither; but you are still working constantly. But I enjoy the freshness of working with different people, and the different styles, like hard rock with Bishop, through to funk/fusion with Lenny MacDowell."

—Simon Goodwin

Dan Pred

Check out the Dan Reed Network; it's some pretty unique music. Drummer Dan Pred says of it, "We've always summed the music up as a

head-on collision between rock and funk. It's guitar oriented, it's funky, and we have sequenced bass lines running. It's 'frock.'"

This past year, the band has been finishing their album, commuting from their home base in Portland six hours to Vancouver to work with producer Bruce Fairbairn. "There's a studio up there with this giant loading bay, which is a big cement room. They miked up the drums in the regular studio and sent everything through speakers into this loading bay, and miked them again in there. It got a big ambient live drum sound that sounds great."

Half of the album was recorded with real drums and half was done with a drum machine. Pred prefers the tunes on which he played live. "'Baby Don't Fade' is probably my favorite track; I like the groove. I also really like 'Forgot To Make Her Mine.' Those are my two favorites because they're rock 'n' roll, and that's what I like best. With machines, you really have to swallow your pride, but I've had to do that before. We had an EP out previously where the whole thing was a drum machine, which was strictly a budget thing but still was really hard to swallow. A drum machine has an undeniable attack mode, and there are a couple of songs on this album that we wanted to have that feel on. I'm not saying the drum machine drives the music harder, but it has a different feel. You can't get an attitude about it or you'll drive yourself crazy. You just have to work with it. I did all the programming on it, though. I hooked up a Roland Octapad, MIDled it up, and had a little remote drum pedal. I played everything on the pads into the drum machine while I was playing live, so it's not too far out. A lot of times you get the six-armed drummer thing going on."

Live, he simply duplicates the parts on an acoustic setup. "I'm not triggering anything as of yet. It sounds a little different to my ear, but I don't know if it does to the audience. I used to be crazy into electronics and have tons of

stuff, but I got out of it. I didn't have any fun playing electronic pads. Then I got my acoustic drums back into action and I haven't gotten into triggering. It's a budget thing again now. After the album was done, we sat down with our management to discuss what we needed to pull off the album live, like different sequencers and keyboards, and a drum trigger just didn't fit into the budget yet. Along with the sequencer, the SP-12 is running and doing things like handclaps, tambourines, and shakers, and I just turn everything up loud in my monitor and play with it," says Dan, whose remainder of the year has been spent on the road.

"It doesn't seem like a tour to me, though, because all my notions of a tour were a bus and giant rooms, but this is riding in a little van and playing a bunch of little clubs like we always have," he laughs.

—Robyn Flans

NEWS...

Steve Smith can be heard on Dweezil Zappa's new record, *My Guitar Wants To Kill Your Mama*, out this past summer, as well as on albums by Kit Walker and Joaquin Liavano. Earlier in the year, Steve toured with the Jazz Explosion, which included Stanley Clarke on bass, Allan Holdsworth on guitar, *Airto* on percussion, Randy Brecker on trumpet, and Bernard Wright on keyboards, as well as touring in Eastern Europe for a month with the Randy Brecker Quintet. His most recent Vital Information album, *Fiafiaga—Celebration*, was released this last summer, and currently the band is on tour. DCI's *Steve Smith, Volume 2* video has recently been released...

Stewart Copeland is working with Stanley Clarke in a project called Animal Logic...

Paul Leim on Tom Kimmel's LP...

Jim Blair on the Commodores' new album and on the road with Howard Hewitt...

Michael Blair is associate producer and bandleader on Gavin Friday's new album. He can also be heard on Dagmar

Krause's album and has been doing some gigging with Elvis Costello...

Barry Keane has been busy with album projects for the likes of Gordon Lightfoot, Anne Murray, Rita McNeil, Roger Whittaker, Joan Kennedy, J.K. Gulley, and Patrick Perez. His recent TV work has included *Danger Bay* and *Sesame Street*. Currently he is on tour with Gordon Lightfoot...

Walredo Reyes, Jr. recently in the studio with Jackson Browne...

Vinnie Colaiuta can be heard on recent records by Tom Scott, Lee Ritenour, Peabo Bryson, Kenny Loggins, Brenda Russell, David Sanborn, the Rippingtons, Eric Marienthal, Djavan, Nik Kershaw, John Patitucci, Allan Holdsworth, Brandon Fields, and a GRP Super Live record, recorded in Japan with Lee Ritenour, Tom Scott, and Dianne Schuur... This month **Butch Miles** is at the Gibson Jazz Party in Denver, Colorado, the Minneapolis Jazz Party, and on a tour of Europe with Peanuts Hucko All-Stars...

John Molo on tour with Bruce Hornsby...

Rick Marotta on Lyle Lovett's upcoming release and Waylon Jennings' newest album. Marotta has also been in the studio producing a group called Burning Street and can be seen in an acting role in the upcoming film *Nightmare On Elm Street IV...*

Craig Krampf in the studio with Debbi Lee...

Joe Franco recently played on Fiona's third record, and he is now in the studio with Dee Snyder...

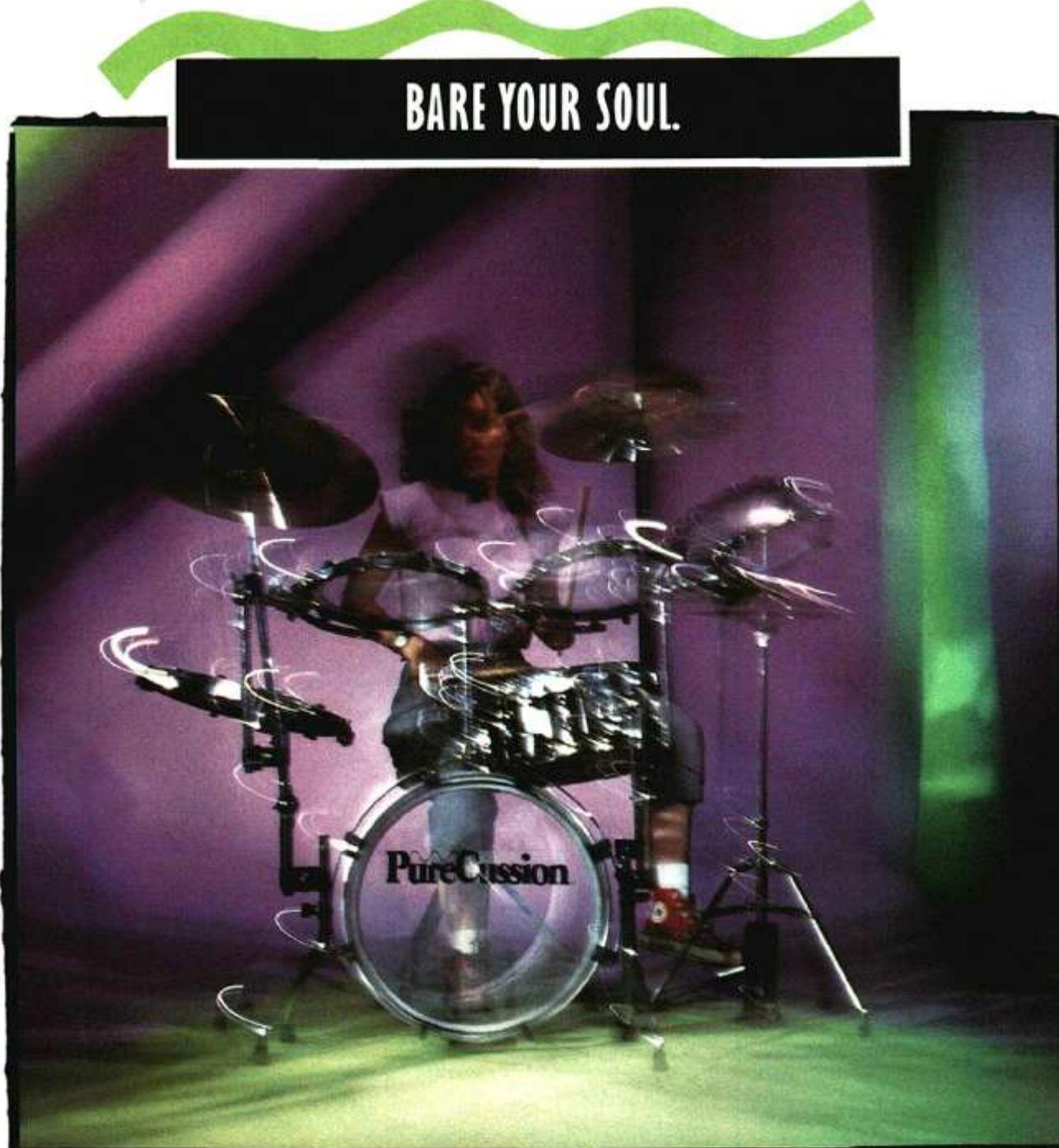
Billy Goodness on tour with Ricky Van Shelton...

J.R. Robinson on recent recordings by Steve Winwood, Robbie Nevil, Randy Newman, Deniece Williams, The Pointer Sisters, Natalie Cole, The Crusaders, Lionel Ritchie, Peter Cetera, and Holly Knight...

Richard Bailey touring with Billy Ocean...

Billy Thomas recently recorded with Emmylou Harris, and is touring with the Hot Band...

Keith Cronin touring with the Pat Travers band.



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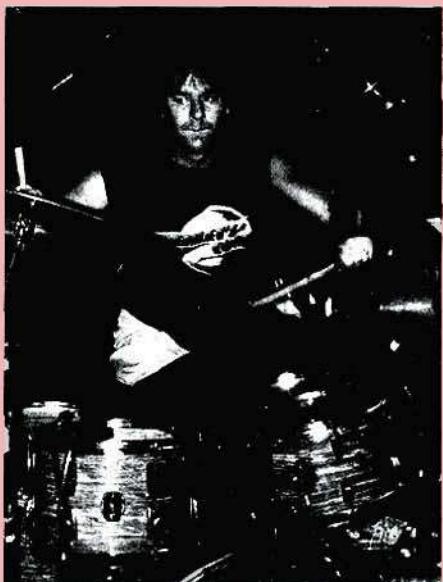


Photo by Mike Jachles

ANTON FIG

Q. You are my absolute favorite drummer; I have always admired your playing. One thing that I have noticed is the way you play your ride cymbal. You don't seem to hit it the way most normal drummers do. What area of the cymbal are you hitting, and with what part of the stick? Also, what type of ride cymbal, sticks, and mic's do you use? Finally, I'd like to ask if Paul Shaffer and the World's Most Dangerous Band is ever going to make a recording.

J. Peter Elkins
Harlingen TX

A. First of all, thanks! I'm not sure where most "normal" drummers hit their ride cymbal (and naturally, it would depend on what type of music was being played), but in a forceful rock situation I usually play it somewhere around the base of the bell. This area could extend a few inches in either direction. I usually hit the cymbal at a point on the stick three or four inches back from the tip. I use Vic Firth's Rock Crusher model drumstick.

On the Letterman show I use a Zildjian K Custom ride, because the sound is pinpointed and does not spread. But often, on recordings and other live dates, I use a Zildjian K ride that is heavy and dark. I use the Zildjian ZMC-1 miking system on the show. It incorporates individual mic's that clip onto each cymbal stand just below the bell of the cymbal. Each mic's goes into a mixer where I can control sensitivity and panning, and then give the engineer a stereo left and right output mix. The system works great, especially when overhead mic's are also used to pick up the liveliness of the toms.

To answer your last question, I believe Paul will do an album sometime in the near future, and that the WMDB may be partially involved. Keep bashing!

CARMINE APPICE

Q. As a student of your publications and techniques for the past six years, I would like to personally thank you for this invaluable collection of information. My question is in regards to the position of the feet on double bass drum pedals. As a progressive hard rock player, for a number of years I have relied on a "toes-on-pedal" position as opposed to a flat-footed position. However, I have recently been informed that "toe players" are likely to be sacrificing some degree of control due to this method. Could you point out any advantages or disadvantages of either position regarding strength, control, etc.?

Peter Jeffery

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

A. Basically, it's true that you do lose a little control on the pedals when you play with the heel up. But you gain so much power that it really makes up for it. The advantage there is the volume you can achieve, and also the actual sound of the bass drum, which generally gets a little more "crack." Control is then a matter of learning how to operate your foot at different positions on the pedal—up toward the front, more toward the middle, or even further toward the back—in order to do faster things like double or triple strokes.



Photo by Rick Mankin

PAUL WERTICO

Q. I saw you with Pat Metheny at Roy Thompson Hall recently and was struck by your drumming and the sound of your cymbals. Specifically, I'm interested in what you were using for ride cymbals.

John Crown

Peterborough, Ontario, Canada

A. Thanks for listening, and I'm glad you enjoyed the concert. I remember that show, partly because Toronto is the home town of one of the group's vocalists, and partly because I was so ill with the flu that day that I almost got struck by a car on the way to soundcheck. I was too weak to run out of its way! Yet, because of the tremendous demands of playing Pat's music, I had to

The only time I use a flat-footed technique is on a ballad where the bass drum is being played softly.

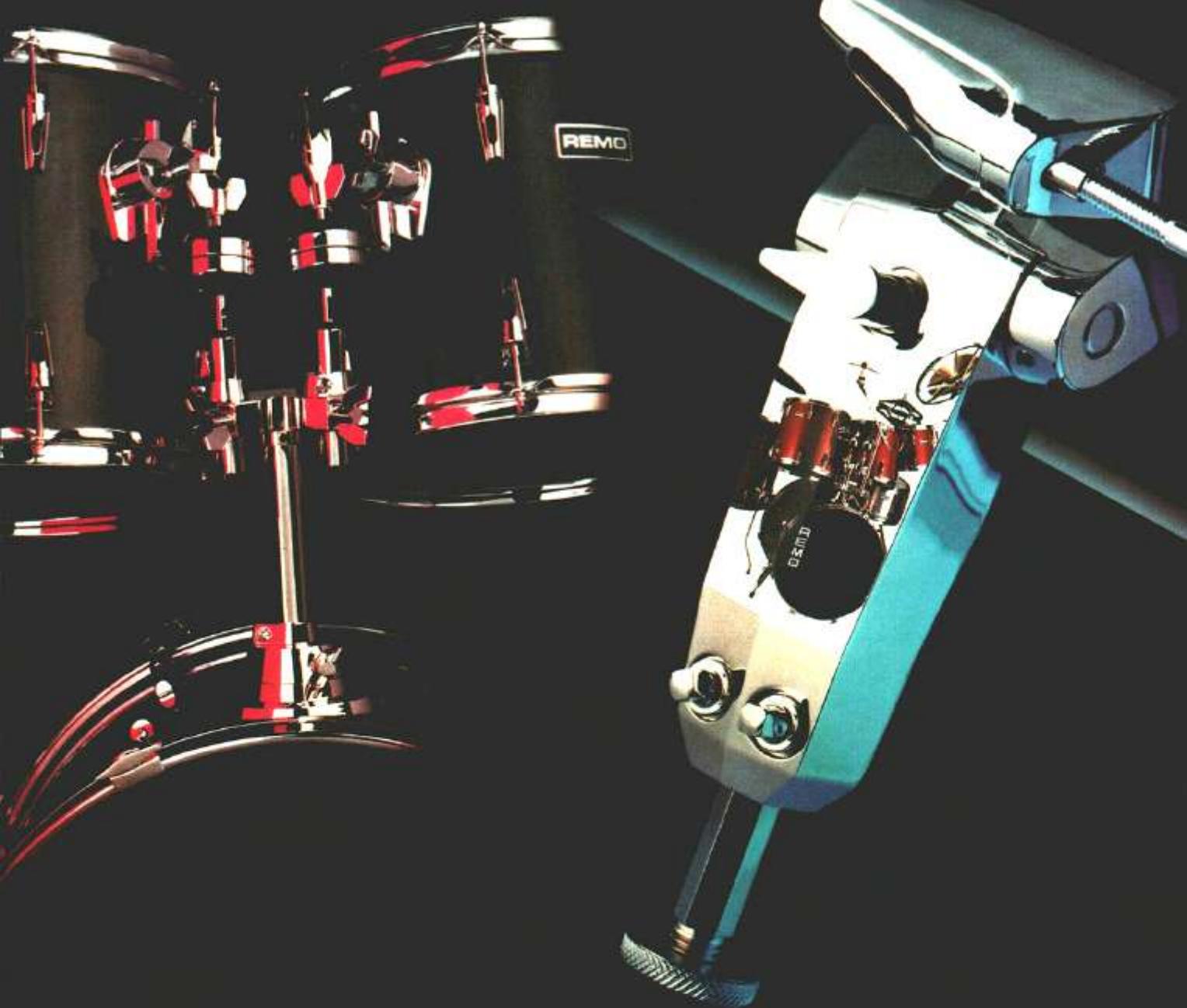
I should point out that, quite often, the shoes you choose to wear can make a great deal of difference to your technique. I used to play in Nike high-top sneakers, but I've recently changed to Snakers, which are sneakers made of snakeskin and that have a little bit lower heel than the Nikes. When you're playing heel-up and have a shoe with a heel on it, you sometimes can't get your foot down when you need to. You'll come down hard and hit the pedal plate or the floor with your heel. That's why I play mostly in flat-footed shoes. I did play in heels for a while, believe it or not, during the Rod Stewart days. In the five years I played with Rod, I used only one pair of shoes to play in, because I had gotten so used to them that they were the only shoes I could play in. But then I switched to the Nikes, and they worked really well.

Seat height is another important element of bass drum technique. I think that most power drummers tend to sit low, because you get more power that way; your body is being supported by the back, and your legs are free to lift up higher and come down heavier. When you sit high, you tend to rely on your legs to support your body and maintain balance.

"rise to the occasion" during the show. I remember not only being fairly pleased with my performance that night, but also being amazed at how great music can draw on powers that we sometimes forget we have!

To answer your question regarding my ride cymbals: My left ride is a Paiste Formula 602 22" thin Flatride with two rivets mounted next to each other. One rivet is a Paiste and the other is a Zildjian. I found that this combination works best on that particular cymbal. I also mounted the rivets on the lightest part of the cymbal so that they would stay out of the way. This was accomplished by putting the cymbal on a cymbal stand that was tilted quite a bit, with the cymbal almost vertical. I then spun the cymbal around a number of times, making a mark where the cymbal stopped. The heaviest part of a cymbal will always stop at the bottom, so I just put the rivets 180 degrees from that spot.

My right ride cymbal is a Paiste 22" Sound Creation Dark Flatride. It sounds great the way it is! Remember, though, that a number of factors are important in getting a good cymbal sound. The type of sticks you use (with Pat I use Pro-Mark hickory 808s), where you hold the stick and how tightly you hold it, whether you play into the cymbal or off of it, and where you play on the cymbal (on Flatrides I like to move the stick around a lot to pull out different overtones) are a few critical points to consider.



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IT'S QUESTIONABLE

Q. I recently bought a hi-hat stand from a friend of mine. It has no manufacturer's name on it, except on a plate at the bottom of the shaft just above the foot pedal. This plate says "Taiwan" and has the capital letters "C.Y.S." in cursive script. The hi-hat has double-braced legs and a memory lock.

I also purchased a bass drum pedal with an identical footboard. It has no name whatsoever, but I do know that it, too, was made in Taiwan. It has a single spring, a nylon strap, and a split footboard.

My question is: Who manufactured these pieces? I think that Tama did, but I'm not sure. They work very well for me.

E.P.

Alamosa CO

A. If the hi-hat and bass drum pedal were manufactured in Taiwan, they were not made by Tama. That company maintains its entire manufacturing operation in Japan. There are several companies in Taiwan who manufacture generic copies of popular name-brand designs under license for distributors in the U.S. It is likely that your items were made by one of these "jobbers."

Q. I own a Yamaha Recording Series drumkit. Because of the addition of more cymbals and drums, floor space is becoming a problem. Will Yamaha be producing a drum rack in the near future?

E.S.

Hollywood CA

A. Yamaha introduced its new System Drum Rack at the Winter NAMM show in January of this year. It is a complete system combining tubular bars with various clamps, connectors, and mounting hardware. Contact your Yamaha dealer for further information, or write the company directly at P.O. Box 6600, Buena Park, California 90622.

Q. I was wondering if you could tell me about the history and value of two cymbals I found while clearing out the warehouse of the store I work for. The cymbals in question are a Zilco 14" thin crash, and a K Zildjian & Cie. of Constantinople 14" medium-weight hi-hat. Their condition could be described as "faded," yet the quality is very good with the exception of limited, minute "nicks" on the edges of both cymbals.

M.O.

Erie PA

Q. I have a question in regards to a 32-year-old Zildjian ride I have. My father handed it down to me, and I want to keep it and perhaps hand it down to my son. On the other hand, I'm currently playing in a band that does no miking of the drums, and I have found no other ride that even comes close to the dynamic sound of this one. So my question is, can (or will) the Zildjian company copy the exact sound of this cymbal at an affordable cost?

B.T.

Bellaire OH

A. We put both questions to Zildjian's Lennie DiMuzio, who gave us the following information: "In response to the first question, the Zilco cymbal was made sometime during the early 1970s, making it anywhere from 18 to 20 years old. The K Zildjian hi-hat cymbal is estimated to be approximately 40 years old. The value of the K is much more than the Zilco, since the Zilco was produced as a "second-line" cymbal by the Avedis Zildjian Company at that time. It was approximately 25% to 30% cheaper than an Avedis Zildjian cymbal, so I would not place too much value on it now. The 14" K Zildjian, if it is in good condition and not dented on the edges or cracked, would be estimated at a value somewhere in the vicinity of \$175.00."

"To answer the second question: It would be impossible to duplicate the sound of an old cymbal that has mellowed out and stood the test of time. No doubt this cymbal is an antique; it should be kept, protected, and used sparingly. Perhaps someday it could be sold at a good profit."

"As a final comment, remember that old instruments do have a

certain value, but that value is in the eye of the buyer, not necessarily the seller. As in the case of all types of antiques, the condition of the item, and the demand versus the availability, are very important factors in determining its value. You would have to personally advertise these cymbals in all the percussion magazines and journals to see if anyone is interested."

Q. My present snare drum has seen better days, and I'm planning on replacing it. I have all Ludwig equipment now. My question is: Which snare drum did John Bonham, of Led Zeppelin, use most? That's the type I want.

A.V.

Monmouth IL

A. According to information provided by Ludwig's Artist Relations Department, John Bonham used a standard Ludwig 5x14 Supraphonic metal snare drum. That drum is still in production and quite popular today, so you should have no trouble in obtaining one.

Q. I have wanted to know for a long time what the difference between a "rack tom" and a "concert tom" is. Could you please educate me?

N.G.

Courtenay, British Columbia, Canada

A. The term "rack tom" refers to tom-toms mounted on or above the bass drum (or drums) on a drumset. In this sense, the term refers more to the position of the drum than to the type of drum, although the vast majority of rack toms seen today are double-headed drums. The term "concert tom" refers specifically to single-headed tom-toms designed with no bottom-head lugs. These drums are generally used in classical or symphonic situations when toms are called for, because they are more easily tuned to specific pitches than are double-headed drums. In this case, the term refers more to the type of drum than to any particular position in which it is used. Confusion arises quite often, however, when "concert toms" are included as part of a drumset. In this situation, they are most often among the smaller toms on the kit, and are mounted as rack toms. Occasionally, however, floor toms will also be single-headed.

Q. There are songs that my band does in which I would like to play double bass as well as playing the hi-hat both open and closed. Is there a device available that would allow me to "lock down" the hi-hat (with my left foot) for double-bass passages and release it again (again using my left foot) for passages in which I want to control the hi-hat?

T.B.

Allenstown NH

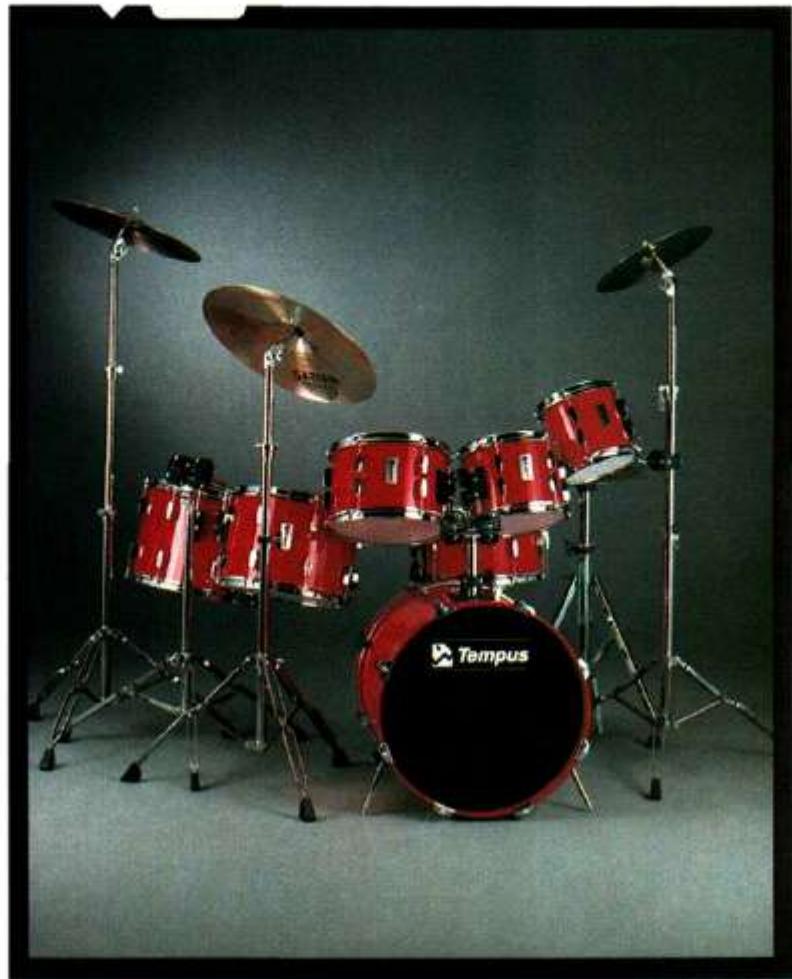
A. Drum Workshop offers the DW505 Drop-Lock Clutch for the purpose you describe. It is designed to allow the top hi-hat cymbal to drop free of the hi-hat rod when a lever on the clutch is struck with the hand or stick. The cymbal then sits directly atop the bottom cymbal, allowing the hi-hat to be played in a loose "closed" fashion. Stepping on the pedal brings the clutch down onto the cymbal again, where it re-engages and lifts the cymbal back up for normal playing. The device is available from any Drum Workshop dealer, or you may contact Drum Workshop at 2697 Lavery Court, Unit 16, Newbury Park, California 91320.

Q. I know that the Premier Drum Company was recently bought out by Yamaha. Will I still be able to purchase Premier components for my Premier kit?

T.M.

Lafayette IN

A. According to Premier spokesman Caryjacari, component parts for Premier drums will continue to be available as they have been in the past. The two parties in the Yamaha/Premier merger have both stated unequivocally that Premier will continue as an independent operation, and that production will continue as usual.



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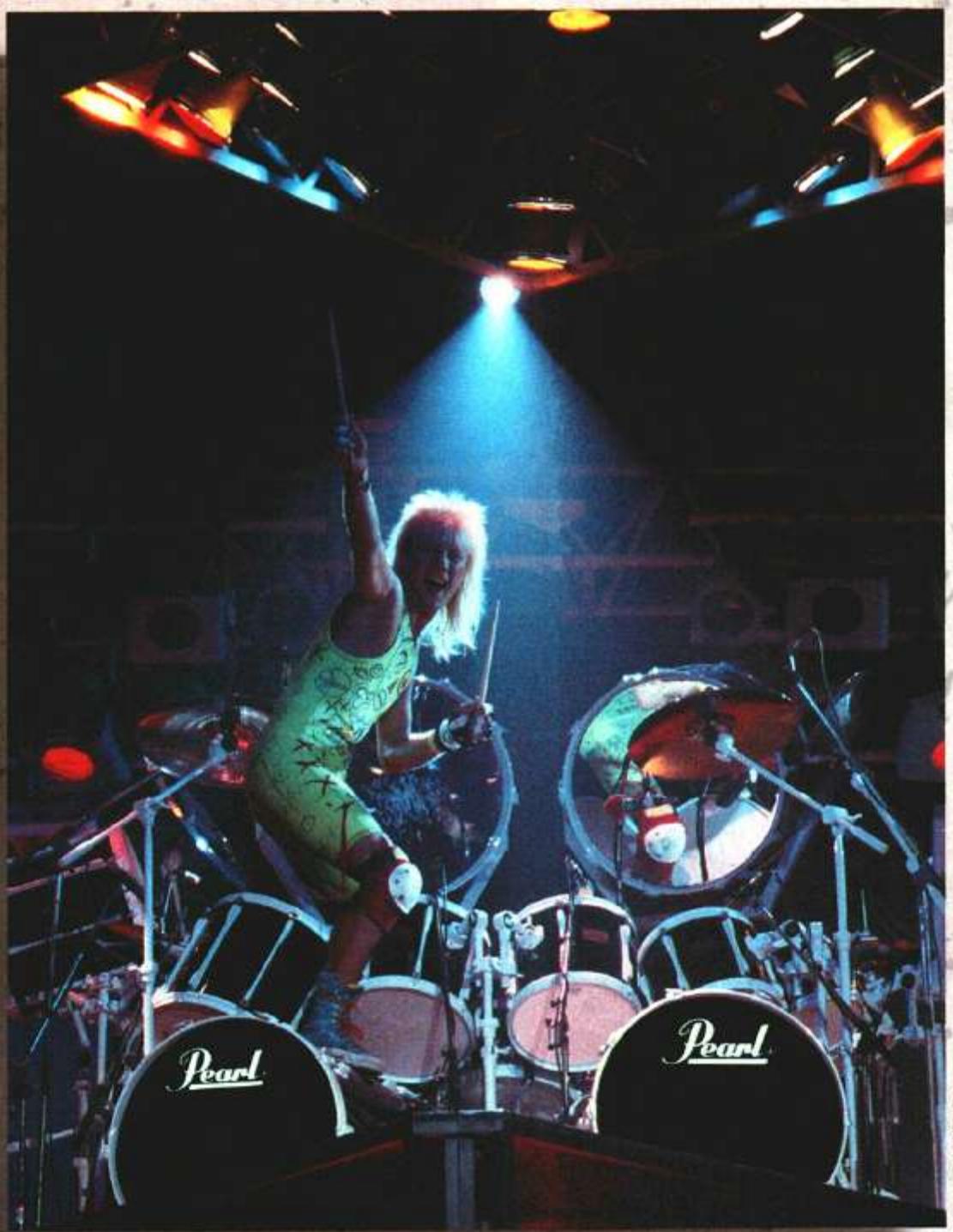
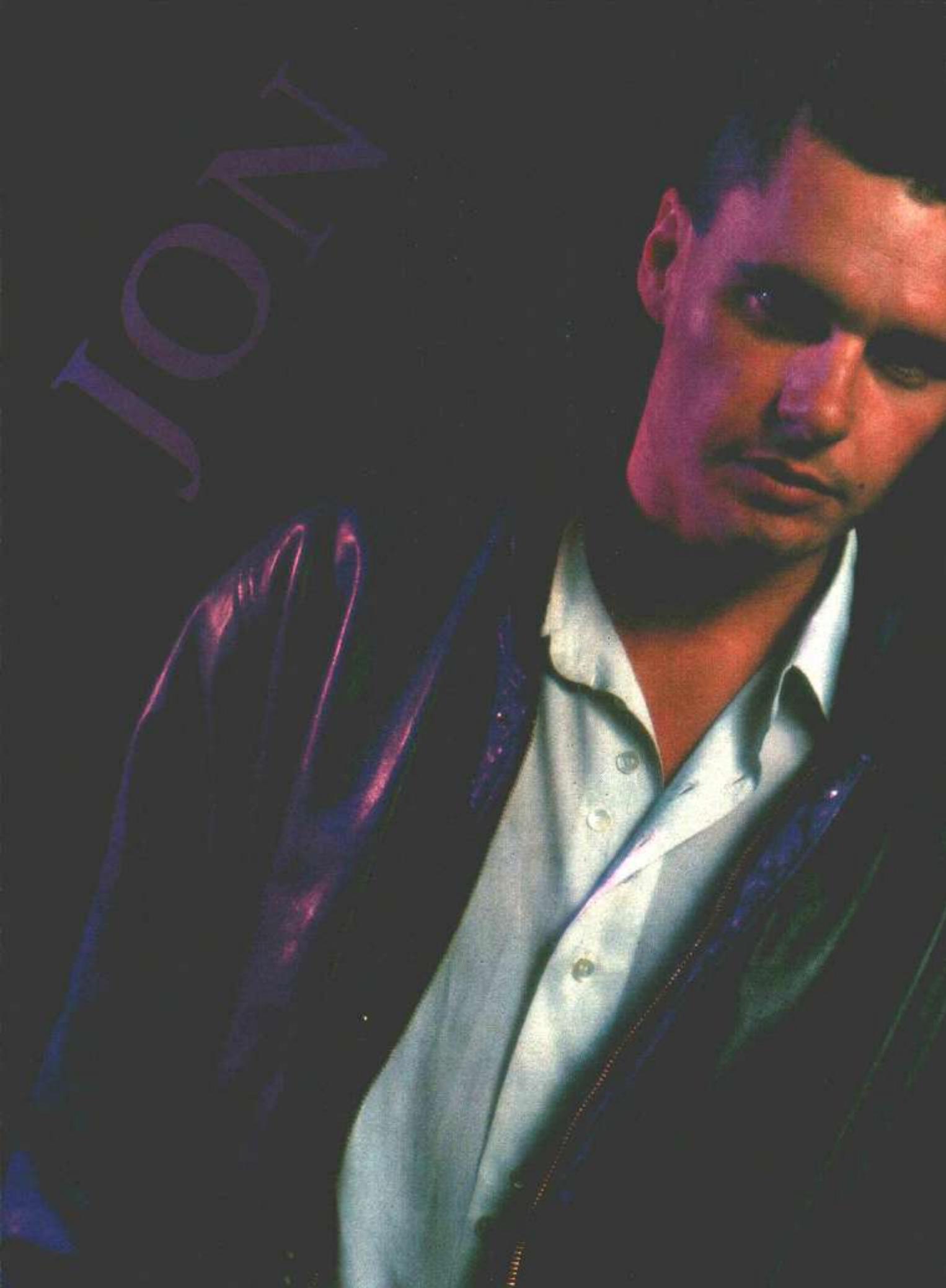


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FAIRY TAL

"ELECTRONICS ARE AMAZINGLY HELPFUL.
BUT SOMEONE WHO DOESN'T CONFUSED WITH
ON HOW TO PLAY AND RELIES
ELECTRONICS TO COMPENSATE."

photo by Jaeger Krios
by Teri Sacccone



Photo by Jaeger Kotos

Innocently and completely unexpectedly, Jon Farriss poses the question, "Are you really sure that drummers want to read about me?" It was a definite "first" within my realm of experience as a music journalist. Yet, as strange as the question was, it was also slightly refreshing. It is with that question—and with the process of answering it—that we begin our story.

Aside from the obvious fact that Farriss is a drummer, the choice to illuminate his career on these pages has something to do with his ten-year-plus participation in the Australian band INXS. With the 1987 release of *Kick*, and the eight months it has spent lingering solidly among the top-five albums on the charts, INXS have catapulted themselves into the major leagues of rock 'n' roll.

Most relevant to this story, however, is Jon's drumming experience. The beginnings of INXS go back to the late '70s, when Jon (still a teenager at the time), his two older brothers, Tim (guitar) and Andrew (keyboard), Kirk Pengilly (sax, guitar), Barry Gary Beers (bass), and front-man Michael Hutchence came together as a unified group.

From a drumming standpoint, Jon's evolution over six albums and eleven years is prominent and vital. Today, he emerges as an eminently skilled player, devising seductive rhythms for INXS's diverse rock stylizations. He may not be a "drummer's drummer," but that isn't a goal of his. Instead, his playing serves the music. A fact that any fan can support is that Jon's drumming has become

the key asset that draws listeners into the music and keeps them there.

Kick courses with pulsating rhythms on every cut, and it's probably Jon's best recorded drumming and percussion work to date. Farriss agrees with that assessment. "I've always strived to have a dance feel and solid grooving. Yet everyone in the band was trying to avoid falling into the category of being just another funk group, because not too long ago, all these bands were getting into that. We still wanted to keep that rock 'n' roll feel that we had developed live, so that was a priority.

"So with this album," he continues, "Andrew—he was the one who started writing the songs for it—decided to write in a style that happens to be very harmonious to my drumming style. We seem to think similarly musically. So *Kick* was the manifestation of Andrew's songwriting and my drumming style. This album was definitely a climax. I was really happy with the results."

Jon says that a lot of what he plays is conceptualized from the melodies his brother Andrew has written. He also adds that, because he and Andrew do think similarly, it is an advantage. "'Need You Tonight' was pretty much straightforward, pretty simple to put together as far as rhythms go. Then a song like 'Wildlife' has a lot of drums on it. Andrew had used a rhythm box on that, and it needed something more interesting than 'Need You' did as far as the rhythm section was concerned. It's a lot more built-up, and there's a lot more going on."

The first single off *Kick*—the aforementioned "Need You Tonight"—has one of the sultriest dance feels of any single in recent memory. Farriss achieved the feeling of movement on that cut by merging his playing and programming skills. Says Jon: "'Need You Tonight' is part machine and part live drums. What I did was to play kick and snare, four on the floor. And we had about five snare sounds making up that one snare. There were three or four bass drum sounds put together as well. We invented the sounds, then put the rhythm down on the computer. Andrew had the idea for the rhythm already written down when he originally brought the song in, so I just basically followed that general idea. Later, I put all the top things on it like the percussion stuff—cowbells and shaker—to make it sound human. So the bass of that are pretty consistent, and the top stuff—the percussion—is all loose and jangly.

"I triggered my kit for 'Calling All Nations,' just doing snare and tom on it. Everything I do recording-wise is played along to a computer. No overdubbing—I just play to the computer. With a computer, you can make it sound the way you want it to. With a click, it's just this big thing clanking in your head—this electronic pulse that drives me crazy after a while. It's like, 'I can't play this anymore! I'm turning into a vegetable!' But the computer is like having someone playing along with me. I just go for a pattern that's real comfortable to work with."

Does he enjoy programming, live and in the studio? "Yeah, I love it," he answers, "and I do it at the live shows as much as I can. I mean, I play with this Yamaha RX5 all the time. I've got headphones here with my setup, and I can basically create whatever I want. It's an aid to me. If I want a percussion player standing to my left side, then I've got one."

"Live, we like to change things around a bit," he adds, "so if I think, 'I reckon this song needs a bit of a push on it,' then I'll put something like a conga on it—very subtle things that I work into the set."

Jon utilized the RX5 in the studio, as well. "I used to use a *LinnDrum*, but I changed to an RX5 because the Linn didn't have MIDI. I can make this talk with everything else because it's MIDI compatible. I also use two Akai S900s."

Among the assorted tools of the trade in his live setup, Farriss has a load of disks with sounds. "I use quite a few of them during a show," he comments. "I use four on the top Akai, and three on the bottom one. I have a vast library of sounds that I've developed in the studios over the past few years. I was able to solo-out my kick, snare, tom, and some of the electronic pads, and just throw them on the computer. Sometimes when we're doing a soundcheck, my drum tech or the engineer might say, 'Your snare sounds great,' and I'll say, 'Fine. Feed me the line back and I'll record it.' I'll keep it on a disk to refer to. So it's a fairly productive little thing, especially for drums. For keyboards, it's a whole different thing, really. But something that's live in timbre, like a snare hit, bang, you can record it and have it there."

"Electronics are amazingly helpful. It's not like this big, bad, evil sort of thing. A lot of older drummers say to me, 'You don't need this stuff to play.' Fine, but don't get me confused with someone who doesn't know how to play and relies on electronics to compensate. Drummers who use computers are a dime a dozen these days, and that's fine. It's the medium we're in and there's nothing you can do about it. But don't get hung up about it. You can still love the breadth and the dynamics of drumming; that's an art that will never die. At the same time, it's a shame that some of the finer points of drumming have been lost on computers."

"I used to like dancing a lot, so I'd go to nightclubs and I'd be listening to two or three hours of consistent, perfect, quantized rhythms. You easily get sick of listening to that because it all sounds the same, over and over and over. On the other hand, they put some Beatles on one night and it sounded so loose that I almost couldn't cope with that either, you know?"

"But you can't get the same feel out of a computer alone as you can playing live. I'm not saying it's impossible, but the difference is very noticeable. I must admit, I love computers and I've used Fairlights and other computers over drums on certain songs."

And conversely, on certain songs, no computer is used at all. "Say we do a ballad like 'Never Tear Us Apart.' I'm playing just my right cymbal and my snare, and I may do an occasional roll on the cymbal. On the other hand, with some songs, like 'Wildlife,' 'Don't Change,' 'Listen Like Thieves,' or 'Kiss The Dirt (Falling Down The Mountain),' I use everything in my setup."

"At the moment I'm triggering an 5900 sampler for my bass drum," he says, "because I'm having trouble with my knee and I want to make sure I'm not causing more damage by over-usage. Eventually, I want to go back to an acoustic bass drum sound, or maybe even blend the acoustic and the electronic. Given the choice, I much prefer the acoustic because I can't get the dynamics out of the triggered sound that I can from the acoustic."

In his acoustic set, he uses a selection of six different snare drums, contingent upon the song and the desired sound. As his drum tech, Anthony Aquilato, explains, "He doesn't use any triggered or sampled snare sounds. He prefers to use live snares and switches his snare depending on the song." Among the selection? Says Anthony: "A Ludwig *Black Beauty*, a Ludwig hammered-bronze, a Slingerland chrome-plated brass, and a Pearl wood snare."

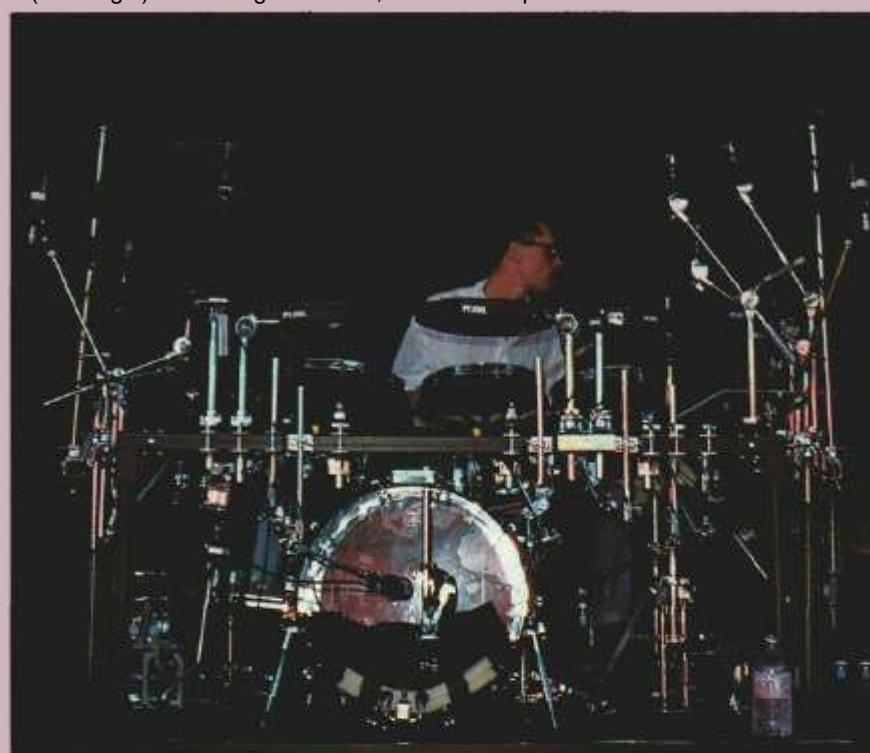
The kit also contains three Remo RotoToms—10", 12", 14"—and four Pearl electronic pads (no longer manufactured), three located above the RotoToms, and one to the left of his hi-hats. There's also a 16 x 16 floor tom and a 22 x 16 bass drum. All acoustic drums are from the Pearl GLX Series, and the acoustic rack is all Pearl hardware. The electronic rack was designed and constructed by Vince Cutman of Marc Industries.

Anthony says that Jon chooses coated white Remo

Ambassador heads for the RotoToms, *Pinstripes* for the top of the floor toms, and clear *Ambassador*s for the bottoms. All the snare drums have coated *Ambassador*s on the tops and clear *Ambassador* snares on the bottoms, and there's an Evans *Hydraulic* head on the bass drum.

Sticks are Pro-Mark Hickory wood-bead 2B customs, and he uses a Danmar wood beater with a small plastic pad attached to the bass drum head, which lends a richer sound to the drum. Mics are all Shure SM-57s.

All his cymbals are Sabian, and the setup includes (left to right) 14" AA regular hi-hats, two 12" AA splashes



(located directly above the hi-hats), a 16" medium thin AA crash, an 18" AA medium crash, 22" and 20" HH Chinas, and a 22" HH heavy ride.

Photo by Jaeger Kotos

At a live show, Jon shrugs off the constraints of conventional expectations. He tends to dance while he plays (depending upon the song), often standing up behind his kit when it allows. "It's an outlet for me, and sometimes I'll just be grooving around, being a little silly," he remarks. "I guess it's a lot more colorful than the usual, but I see drumming, dancing, and just moving around as all part of a medium for self-expression. That doesn't mean I turn into Michael Jackson up there, but I like to groove. On some songs I like to be able to get up and have fun. It's a real buzz."

"I do a lot of nonsense things that are more theatrical than anything else," he continues. "It's a more calisthenic approach to drumming rather than the conservative, nose-down, don't-look-up-at-people sort of thing. I flip sticks and sometimes pretend I'm hitting something when I'm not. [Laughs] Don't ask me why, I've just always done it. I guess it may sound stupid, but it's just part of my sense of humor, and I don't even realize I'm doing it. The other guys will look at me and say, 'What are you doing?' It's really just part of dancing. It's a party and that's the essential vibe. We're all having fun up there."

"I love the group, and I love the dance stuff and the heavier stuff and the slower stuff. I also love it when it's a bit of a challenge—like when it's difficult to do but it sounds easy. Sometimes it's really hard, I reckon. Other times, it's so easy it's unbelievable. It also depends on how I feel. I mean, sometimes I'll really like playing a dance song that's real cool and slinky, yet sometimes it

isn't as much fun to play as it is to listen to. Sometimes, when you're recording something, it feels weird when you're playing it, but when you listen to it back on tape, it sounds good."

Early this summer, in the midst of their North American tour (which began a year ago), Jon was grappling with something a bit more sobering than what he's been used to. He was afflicted with an acute arthritic condition, which manifested itself in his knee. Walking with a cane, he was dealing with the pain of the arthritis, the problem of not being as mobile and physical as he normally is, and the fear that his condition might be a consistent problem. "There's a lot of inflammation, and the whole matter becomes quite complex when you're playing gigs practically every day," he commented. He was receiving treatment occasionally and was on medication, but his outlook was pretty optimistic, despite the inconvenience.

Under normal physical conditions, Farriss relies on a series of warm-up stretches based on the martial-art discipline of Tai Chi. Jon explains: "I started with Tai Chi

and that was incredible for me. It was sort of a tambourine drum without the jingles on it, and he attached it to a stool. I can never forget the assimilation I had with that instrument; it was so intrinsic to my whole nature. I believe a little bit in an internal psyche that communicates within, and maybe when I was young I did have a vibe for what I would be doing as an adult. Who knows?"

"I felt there was this internal guide with drums, even though I also felt very unknowable and naive towards what I was doing," he continues. "Even though I was plodding in the dark, lacking the technical experience, it still didn't matter. That was, in a way, the brilliance of how naive I was. I was just going ahead with tempo, conceiving that before anything else."

Even though his father was not a professional musician, Jon credits him as being his source of inspiration as a youngster. "My Dad used to play in a marching band when he was a kid growing up in England. I think he was sort of a frustrated drummer. He would pick up a drum and show me how to play things. He was the one who taught me how to play paradiddles and that kind of stuff. So I was basically comprehending all of that when I was really young."

What about his first kit? "I guess I was about six," he recalls. "It was a really simple kit, and it had very quaint, very jazzy features. I've never seen anything like it since. There was a pole coming out of the middle of the bass drum—classic. I had rigged that first drum that I had onto it and there was also a snare that was the same color as the bass drum. I didn't know what I was doing—riding with my right hand, playing the bass drum with my left foot, [laughs] For about four years, I was just jamming like that. I didn't have any hi-hats, I didn't have a tom-tom, I was just playing the beat."

He says he really dug the Beatles "a helluva lot. And I played along to a lot of their music." So Ringo Starr had an indelible influence? An impassioned "yes" is Jon's answer. "People obviously follow his drumming because it's really simple. But it's classic pop drumming at its best. The idea with him is not what you hear but what you don't hear. I think that taught me form; the drumming I was hearing had a definite shape, and I could understand that form as a child. It wasn't some complex funk-jazz beat that would be hard to grasp."

"So yes," he adds, "it was a pop drummer who I could most identify with. That music had a lot of melody, and it went through a great range of styles. It was a big part of my life, as it was for Andrew and Tim."

Growing up in a middle-class suburb of Sydney, the Farriss household fostered a conducive atmosphere for the children to pursue their individual musical paths. "We were in the best possible situation. There was a piano in the house, plenty of records, and I was allowed to play drums in the house! Which is about as unusual as allowing two dogs to mate in the living room, you know? My parents knew we could handle the responsibility of not playing at 3:00 A.M., and it was cool to get in a quick ten minutes before going off to school, which was something I used to like to do. We also had band practice at my house twice a week. It was great. I guess it's pretty wild how everything just fell into place."

about eight or nine years ago. Tai Chi is a slow form of martial arts—of Kung Fu, really. It develops your breath, your balance, and your strength. I did it really religiously for about two years. As the years went on, I started to use most of the exercises for warm-ups, picking out the bits that I liked and that were helpful to my playing.

"It was good for my balance in drumming because in Tai Chi, everything is round and flowing. And since it's done very slowly, it's almost like you're hypnotized; you sort of meditate while doing it. That flowing, circular motion naturally comes out in drumming. I never got into the defense side of Tai Chi; I pursued it for its therapeutic values.

"Actually," he adds, "I go through cycles of what I do as warm-up exercises. During the past two years, I've been working out right before I play: skipping rope with a five lb. weight on it for about 20 minutes; working out with free weights and a curling bar; doing some Tai Chi stretching. Basically, the most important thing is stretching, but unfortunately, I haven't been able to do that recently on this tour."

So how did Farriss get involved with music to begin with? At three, Jon became entranced by the concept of drums—the sound, feel, and shape. "From the moment I first saw a drum," he says with a grin, "I instantly zoned in on them. Since then, that's been my predominant vehicle in terms of artistic outlet. It was something that was so natural to me, I was immediately pulled in by it.

"I had been given a drum for Christmas by my father,



Photo by Kevin Pierce

do a beat and read it while I was doing it, but I was doing all that kind of stuff years before. Now I was doing it again because it was a lesson. I became really disturbed about it, and that was the end of that."

Farriss developed his skill with percussion the same way he learned to play drums: Harboring an interest, he simply taught himself. On *Kick*, he plays bongos and timbales, as well as his usual assortment of tambourine, shakers, woodblocks, etc. "It came about in such a simple way, really. It was just a matter of listening to a piece of music that had some percussion on it and asking, 'What is that?' Being naive and curious is basically what it came down to.

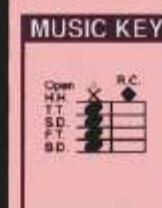
"You see, when you realize what it is they are playing and how they are doing it, you can then adapt that to doing something you want to do in your band. Conga and bongo playing, for example: They are things that take a fair bit of experience, and I certainly don't profess that I'm a great conga player. It takes practice and time to get the dynamic range on that skin. It's not a matter of jumping on it straight away and mastering it, like shakers, tambourines, or cowbells. With things like bongos and congas, it takes some understanding of form to play them. There are some very developed conga players who can do some amazing things. I'm able to pull through with congas and do the job. It might take me some time, and I might have to tape my hands up, but I'm the one playing it because I know what I want to hear. That's easier than trying to explain what I want to some guy who's been brought in.

"Nevertheless, I've always been able to adapt to an instrument and just ad-lib from there and make it work. I'll sit there, feel it through, and slowly develop a form. It might take me an hour to get comfortable, and then I'll be ready to go in and record it. The most important thing is that I'll know from the start what I want to hear, and how I want the instrument to work with the song.

"If it's a situation in the studio where we don't have that much time, and we want to knock it down all at once," he elaborates, "or if we want a certain player's particular feel on it, then we might hire someone else. But that's usually happened when we've tried to avoid confusion, which can happen sometimes when I go in to try something—the nonsense that goes down when people keep running in with their opinions."

"But it really depends on the situation. I mean, I did a lot of my own percussion on *Kick* because I'm more familiar with [producer] Chris Thomas now, and I just said to him, 'Look, I want to do my own percussion.' On *Listen* I did a bit of it, but he brought in Ray Cooper for some of it. On *The Swing* I did all my own percussion, as I did on all the albums prior to that. But on *Listen*, Chris was still teething, feeling his way through with the band. And I must admit, with six members it must be difficult to balance all that out. Anyway, it's quite amazing what you can do by teaching yourself. Of course, there's also a great deal that you can't do, but I think time and work eventually fixes that."

Does Jon think that the supportive environment he experienced at home is the reason behind his early attainment of a prosperous career? Jon indicates that it actually goes deeper than that. "I don't know," he responds. "There was always this *intense persistence*. Tim,



Jon Farriss has a slightly different approach to rock drumming. His main concern is to groove, and Jon's ability to do just that has attributed to the huge success of INXS. Jon's uniqueness comes from the way he embellishes the beats he plays. Every now and then, he enhances a beat by dropping in a cymbal crash or an unexpected flurry on the snare. This spontaneity adds a sense of surprise to Jon's playing. The following are some of the different grooves that Jon uses and if you listen to these tunes, you will add to these beats.

toms, for example. This spontaneity adds a sense of excitement and surprise to Jon's playing. The following examples show some of the different grooves that Jon plays in INXS, and if you listen to these tunes, you will hear how he adds to these beats.



This is the beat to "Black And White," again from the *Shaboo Shoobah* album.



"Jan's Song," from *Shaboo Shoopah*, has a reggae-rock feel, and this is the beat Jon plays during the solo section.



This beat, which has a half-time feel to it, is played in the closing section of "Old World New World," from *Shaboooh Shoobah*.



The following example is the hit "What You Need," from the *Listen Like Thieves* album (Atlantic 7 81277-1). The first measure is the verse pattern, and the second measure is the chorus pattern.



Here is a hard-driving beat that Jon plays on the song "Red Red Sun," from *Listen Like Thieves*.



This last example is "New Sensation," from *Kick* (Atlantic 7 81796-1). The first measure is the verse pattern, and the second measure is the chorus pattern.



CHARLIE MORGAN

One of the great things about writing for *Modern Drummer* is that you are often able to get behind-the-scenes insights into the workings of the music business. Seeing Elton John recording the backing track for "Rope Around A Fool" for his 1988 album, *Reg Strikes Back*, is a case in point. Outsiders are not generally encouraged at sessions like this, for obvious reasons: When material is being created, artists like to be able to take their time and get it right without feeling the need to put on a show for anybody. However, my presence was happily tolerated, because I was there as the guest of Elton's drummer, Charlie Morgan.

I had half expected to find Charlie alone in the studio, reading from a chart and playing along to a click track, so it's good to find the whole rhythm section, including Elton playing piano and doing guide vocals, in there together. There is a "click" from a drum machine, with percussion sounds that Charlie is experimenting with to give the points of emphasis he wants, but otherwise all you have is five musicians playing together. The number, a lively funky shuffle, is being "routined." They are taping it, coming out and listening, making slight modifications, going again, and listening again. There isn't a lot of discussion, just the occasional word here and there. Producer Chris Thomas asks Charlie to change his Premier Piccolo snare drum for something a bit deeper, so Charlie changes to a Project One. After the next run-through, Thomas says, "Would you go back to the biscuit-tin drum, please?" Charlie sings and mimes a piece of phrasing to Davey Johnstone, the guitarist; Davey nods his head and smiles approvingly. They don't practice it, but they do it in the next take, and it seems to meet with tacet approval. Eventually, Elton John sits in the control room and sings along to the same take three or four times, then he says, "That's about it. We'll come back in the morning and do it when we're fresh, but that's the way we'll play it." As it turns out, they don't, because (as Charlie subsequently tells me) Chris Thomas later decides that the take that Elton has been singing along to is the one to be used on the album.

Charlie Morgan had been one of the "happening" young studio drummers in London for about six years when he was asked to play on a few album tracks for Elton John, which led to his becoming a fixture in the band. Some of his recording credits appear in the discussion. A small

sample of others, which helps demonstrate his versatility, is Gary Moore (*Run For Cover*), Linda Thompson, and Tina Turner ("Thunderdome" from the soundtrack to *Mad Max 2*). Charlie is tall with a well-modulated voice—the type of Englishman you could imagine being cast as James Bond. His expressions while he plays range from boyish enthusiasm to hawk-like intensity. He jokes that part of his success is due to "being nice," but he is the sort of person who is able to generate a feeling of good humor and pleasantness—a valuable quality, particularly in the studio—so there is probably more than a grain of truth there.

SG: I've been watching you record a backing track with the whole rhythm section playing together. Is this the way it is usually done?

CM: With Elton it is, yes; but the trend for the last couple of years has been to layer everything, sequencing a lot of the stuff, and often putting drums on later. I've done a lot of work playing along to a complete track, overdubbing the drums. So doing it this way is quite refreshing.

SC: Do other people tend to record first with a full drum machine part, or just a click?

CM: Usually it's a drum machine guide. Nik Kershaw, for instance, would put down a drum machine guide, play along to it, and build up what he called a "synth pad"—a basic pad on which to work. Then he'd bring in the musicians, and we'd overdub on top. It worked admirably for Nik's style and for what he wanted, but I don't think it would work for Elton. He's the sort of person who bounces off the people around him, and for that reason we do a backing track, rather than one overdub on top of another. But, of course, if anything needs repairing after that, it can be done.

SG: You had the "click" in the form of the drum machine pattern.

CM: Chris Thomas likes to do that; in fact most people do. We're working on 32-track digital, so if the first half of one take is great, and the second half of another is great, the two halves can be digitally spliced together. You don't physically splice it, but you set up the points and transfer them to another 32-track tape machine, making a composite take out of the two. So for that reason it's really up to me to keep it in time with the click. I don't mind doing that. I got used to it when I was doing jingles. It does mean that you can capture what's best from more than one performance. If we were

doing it live, maybe the audience wouldn't notice if it wasn't quite so good at the beginning. The ambience of the moment can capture an audience. But if they are going to buy a record, they're going to listen to it time and time again, and if it's not perfect all the way through, they won't be satisfied.

Elton is one of the greatest live performers around today. The concerts we did in Australia with The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra proved the point. He is one of these people who bounces off an audience and the rest of the band. We had a wonderful time on the world tour, but particularly in Australia with an 88-piece orchestra. He got a particular buzz off the whole thing, and performed better than ever. So the best way to record Elton is in a semi-live environment, in which he has the rapport with the other players.

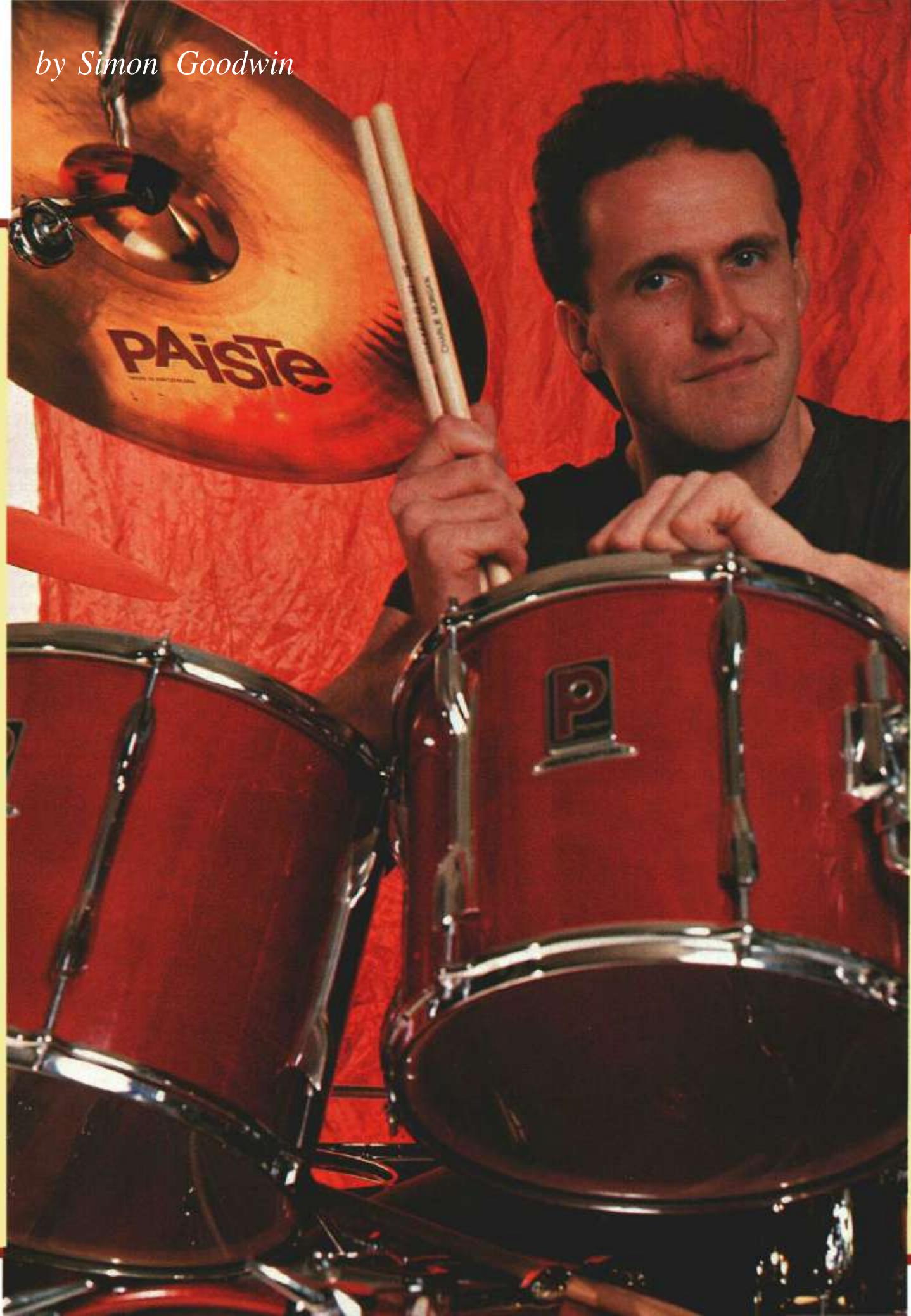
SG: Today I saw the band learning a new number, but there seemed to be very little in the way of discussion and analysis; you all just clicked together. Does this always happen?

CM: Normally it does, now. When we started with this lineup, it wasn't quite so comfortable. When I first worked with Elton, I'd never met Davey Johnstone [guitar] and Fred Mandel [keyboards] before. I just walked into the studio, and there they were. I was originally booked with another bass player, a guy called Paul Westwood, who I'd worked with before. David Paton worked with another drummer on that album, because Elton was using about five different rhythm sections on it. Things clicked quite quickly because I had developed the knack of working with different people and bending with their idiosyncrasies. But what you saw today was the culmination of two albums, 170 concerts, and heaven knows how much in the way of rehearsals in the two-and-a-half years since I first met Elton. There is almost a state of ESP between us now, and it doesn't take many runs through a song to reach the point where everything is clicking.

SG: Learning a new number and recording it for an album within the space of two or three hours must put you under a lot of pressure to deliver. Do you ever listen to something much later and wish that you had done it differently?

CM: It has been known. There have been times when I thought that everyone else played brilliantly, and I played really badly. But over the past few years, I've developed

by Simon Goodwin





the ability to work out what I'm going to play on a number within the first five runs-through, and then stick to it unless I'm told otherwise. If the producer says that I've got completely the wrong idea, I have to go back to the drawing board and start again. In the session field it is a case of trying to play an almost identical track each time, until you get the one with the right feel. Occasionally you do come up with a different fill or something like that, but then it's up to the producer to decide which one is the take.

SG: I noticed you doing different things: Sometimes you were doing some buzzed grace notes on the snare drum, sometimes not; sometimes you were busy on the hi-hat, sometimes just playing between the beats. You were creating and experimenting, and the other people were leaving you to get on with it.

CM: I think that Chris and Elton rely on my judgment to a large extent in regards to what sounds right and what doesn't. We listen to everything we do, and I can think, "No, that's too busy; maybe I should simplify it to allow more breathing space." Today I think we had problems keeping it in the groove at first, because I was too busy. So I honed down what I was doing so that it wouldn't get in the way of what Elton was doing. It's not a Charlie Morgan solo album, it's an Elton John album, and it's important to remember that. What I do might be clever, but it might not ideally complement the track. On the other hand, I might leave something out, and Chris Thomas might say, "I liked what you were doing before," so I'll put it in again the next time 'round. They keep all the takes, so that they can go back and point out what they want. But if I leave something out, and the producer doesn't mention it, I assume that he feels we're better off without it. So while I'm honing down my part, I'm trying to be aware of what they might or might not want. It can be difficult if you are

working with a producer for the first time. You just have to be confident and launch into it.

SC: There must be a lot of pressure if you are creating a drum part for a song by a major artist that is going to be listened to by millions of people for years.

CM: If you think too hard about the pressure, you don't play your best. I just have to rationalize and say, "Okay, if I don't get it right this time, we'll do another take." I do what feels right to me and just go for it. That is, after all, what they've booked me for; and if not, I'll soon find out. I think that that's the session attitude that comes with experience. When I started doing sessions, I was absolutely petrified—almost rigid with fear—that I would play a wrong note and everyone else would look at me. I've become considerably more thick-skinned over the years as far as that aspect is concerned. But at the same time, I've tried hard not to lose the freshness and enthusiasm. You can become the sort of session musician who's seen it all and done it all, and it is reflected in your playing. It can get like an office job, and the resulting attitude is what has given the "session musician" a bad name in some circles. It's an image that the younger players are trying to dispel. The role of a session player has changed over the years. Once they were required to go in, play the part as written, go away, and send an invoice. But I've found in recent years that people book you for your own expertise or your individual style, and expect you to put your own stamp on the music. It's much more creative, but you're not writing the song for them. It's a question of adding that particular sparkle to it in the way that they want.

I've found that a problem you do have to cope with is keeping the same fresh attitude. It's possible to become jaded and mentally tired, because you get dragged through a lot of things. But I'm pleased to say that a very large proportion of what I

do is very satisfying and rewarding.

SG: If you're playing a lot of rock music that depends on a heavy 2 and 4, doesn't this become repetitive and restrict creative thought?

CM: Yes, it can, but there are ways of approaching it. There was a sketch by Peter Sellers in which he was playing the head of a school for pop musicians. He was asked whether he was looking for signs of musical talent. "Oh yes," he said. "Any sign of that and they're out." [laughs] There is some truth in that, but just because they want you to go "whoomp, crack, whomp, crack" for a lot of the time, it doesn't mean that your creativity goes out of the window. You can have that backbeat, but there are the embellishments as well that give a particular part its own identity. Also, you don't have to have the backbeat through everything. I find myself replacing drum machine tracks on which they've put a backbeat all the way through, because they can't think of anything else to do. I can perhaps leave it out altogether for two bars, and then when I bring it in again it has much more impact because of the element of surprise. What you leave out is as important as what you put in. I try to keep the original flavor of a song, but stop its being repetitive. If that is all they want, they could stay with a drum machine part. There are ways of jiggling around with a drum machine so that it *almost* feels like a real drummer. But a drummer can vary things.

SG: I can't remember whether it differs from the original record, but the live version of "Take Me To The Pilot" was magnificent because of the unexpected backbeats that appeared in it.

CM: That was a truly magic part, and one which I hardly changed at all from the original. It was actually my namesake Barry Morgan who had the original idea for that part. I loved it so much; there was no way I could change it. With Elton's music, we've made very few changes in the basic feel of things, particularly the early stuff. Everything that was played was right. There are exceptions: For the concert version of "Burn Down The Mission," I was asked to nail the backbeat to the floor. It wasn't like that on the original, but I was asked to play more of an '80s part in order to keep it tight with so many musicians on stage. There are other classics, like "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me," in which I do the original drum fills. They are Nigel Olsson's fills, but everyone expects them to be there.

"MAYBE ELECTRONICS HAVE TAKEN WORK AWAY FROM PEOPLE; BUT MAYBE IN SOME CASES THE WORK WASN'T THERE IN THE FIRST PLACE, AND ELECTRONICS IS BEING USED AS A SCAPEGOAT."

SG: You mention keeping it tight with the orchestra. Different drummers have different stories about playing along with symphony orchestras; what's yours?

CM: Actually, everything else since then has been a bit of an anticlimax. It was the biggest buzz of my entire life, as far as playing was concerned. Just before the concert, which was broadcast live across Australia, Phil Collins was interviewed. He said, "I don't envy Charlie Morgan's job, having to keep the orchestra in time." The funny thing is that with The Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, they were so concerned about playing in time and making the whole thing tight that there were no problems at all. I know from experience that there's a tendency for orchestras to keep ploughing on regardless. Most of the time it's dragging, but they'll carry on in their own rhythm and leave the rock musicians to sort themselves out—because, of course, when there are 35 string players and one drummer, you're outnumbered.

SC: Surely a sympathetic conductor is the key to it all?

CM: Yes, a sympathetic conductor is important, particularly for what we were doing in Australia, but you must also have an orchestra who are willing to listen to the band. The great thing about this orchestra is that they had a very young average age. Most of them had grown up with Elton's music and respected him for who he is, and they were overjoyed to be playing with him. So they were eager to please. They'd come up to me in the bar afterwards and say, "Did we play in time tonight?" I don't want to damn orchestral players, but in England you very rarely get them even fraternizing with you, let alone asking your opinion. It's very much "us and them," but in Australia, everyone became friends.

SG: During the performance, you were wearing headphones. What did you have coming through?

CM: I had a general mix, but heavy on Elton's piano and voice, light on the drums—because I could hear them acoustically—and a mix of the orchestra so that I could compensate if there were any problems. I never needed to, though, for reasons we've been into, and also because at least half the orchestra had cans as well so that they could hear me.

SG: Were you following the conductor, or was he following you and Elton?

CM: James Newton Howard, the conductor, was listening very much to Elton, and

to a certain extent, to me. But there were occasions when I needed to follow him. For that reason he had to be visible to me. My kit was off to one side of the stage. I was facing Elton across the stage, and if I looked about 45 degrees to my right, there was James with his baton. I could follow him, and he could turn 'round to check that everything was okay with me. There was a lot of eye contact going on. One very nice thing was that when I looked over and above James, there was one entire bank of the orchestra. Within a few dates I was looking up there and smiling, and I'd get 10 or more faces smiling back at me.

SG: How did you feel when it was all over?

CM: Terrible, [smiles] Coming off tour and not having thousands of people applauding you every night is a bit of a psychological blow. It certainly takes time to readjust. Even after getting over the jetlag, I found myself almost having an anxiety attack at 8:00 every evening. It was still that magic time, the gig time. I found myself pacing around, unable to relax. It isn't a real situation on the road, but you find bands who tour continually because they become hooked on it.

SG: A lot of bands seem to do an annual album and tour routine.

CM: An album is a rarified atmosphere, in

a way, if you are doing it as part of a band and not as a session player. You are with the same group of people, shut away in a studio.

SG: Isn't there an element of this with Elton John? You are part of the band.

CM: Yes. In some ways it's a new experience for me, because I cut loose from bands quite early on. Any band I was in was only as good as the person who turned up the latest, drank the most, or took the most drugs. I wasn't prepared to be dragged down by people who behaved like that; I knew that they were destined for failure anyway. As soon as I got an opportunity to break into sessions, I stayed there. From an early age I've been a great believer in turning up on time with the right attitude, the right equipment, and doing the right job.

SG: Are you signed to Elton while you are not actually working with him?

CM: Yes, although the current album is the first thing we've done since coming off the world tour. In the meantime, I've been free to do any other sessions that have come along. Elton has kept the band on a retainer, which is unusual these days. With most bands, the musicians are either members of the band who are receiving royalties, or they are ancillary players who are brought in to do a job and who disappear into the

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Photo by Sue Stanton

BOUCHARD

by
Deborah
Frost

Blue Oyster Cult, in its platinum prime, was the rarest of animals: a smart heavy metal band. And Albert Bouchard was hardly the typical hard rock drummer. Founder of the band in 1967, he wrote its most interesting material, often collaborating with visionary lyricists R. Meltzer and Patti Smith. Connoisseurs of the Almighty Drum Solo still rank Bouchard's performances among the legendary.

*After 15 years, Bouchard left the Cult and began recording *Imaginos*, the solo album he'd been planning even before B.O.C. was formed (one of *Imaginos*'s songs actually provided the band's name). *Imaginos*'s strange brew originally included the *Doors*' Robbie Krieger, the *Dream Syndicate*'s Karl Precoda, *Billy Idol* drummer Thommy Price, Aldo Nova, Kenny Aaronson, Tommy Morroniello (Ian Hunter), Tommy Mandel (Bryan Adams, Peter Wolf), and Helen Wheels. Bouchard also invited the *Cult*'s Joe Bouchard, Allen Lanier, and Buck Dharma to join him in the studio, a fact that contributed to an ironic turn of events: After a six-year gestation, Columbia Records plans to release the tracks they cut as the next *Blue Oyster Cult* record.*

Bouchard returned to B.O.C. for a brief West Coast tour, but has been more involved with new projects—including teaching drums. In addition to numerous session dates, recent collaborations spotlight not only his power drumming but also his drum programming and talents as guitarist, writer, arranger, and producer. He's written with Mark Barkan (author of *Top-40* classics like "Pretty Flamingos"), Richie ("Tossin' and Turnin'") Adams, Gene ("Feel Like Making Love") McDaniels, and singer Robert Cordon. He produced a well-received independent album, *Bambo*, for David Roter, with whom he co-wrote "Joan Crawford" and "Unknown Tongue" for the *Cult*. He's been busy out of the studio, too—performing with artists as diverse as Peter Noone, the Spencer Davis Group, ex-Plasmatic Richie Stotts, the Mamas & the Papas, and his own group, Bouchard.

A once undefeated high-school wrestler, Bouchard began running not long after leaving the *Cult*, and has competed successfully in numerous road races, including three New York City Marathons. Besides taking home the third-place trophy in a recent Sri Chinmoy Marathon, he's proudest of beating David Lee Roth in the '87 New York City race.

DF: Your mother told you that you'd never make it as a drummer because you didn't have any rhythm. What happened?

AB: I had a very strong desire. I played piano for four or five years and played organ in church. But when I was 11, I heard "Walk, Don't Run" by the Ventures, and it had this boss drum solo. Then there was a string of drum-oriented hits out; next I heard "Flamingo Express" by the Royal Tones and "Let There Be Drums" by Sandy Nelson. I immediately became totally immersed and started talking all kinds of foolishness—like I was going to become a pro-

fessional musician. My mother got very upset, and her first reaction to discourage me was to say, "You can't play the drums. You're terrible; you have no rhythm."

DF: Where did you live?

AB: Clayton, New York, right where the St. Lawrence River meets Lake Ontario. It was pretty much a cultural wasteland—no offense to anybody who lives there. I never heard of Chuck Berry until some group came over from Canada and played "Johnny B. Goode." There was only one radio station. It was mostly country & western. Black artists just did not get played.

DF: Your parents were farmers?

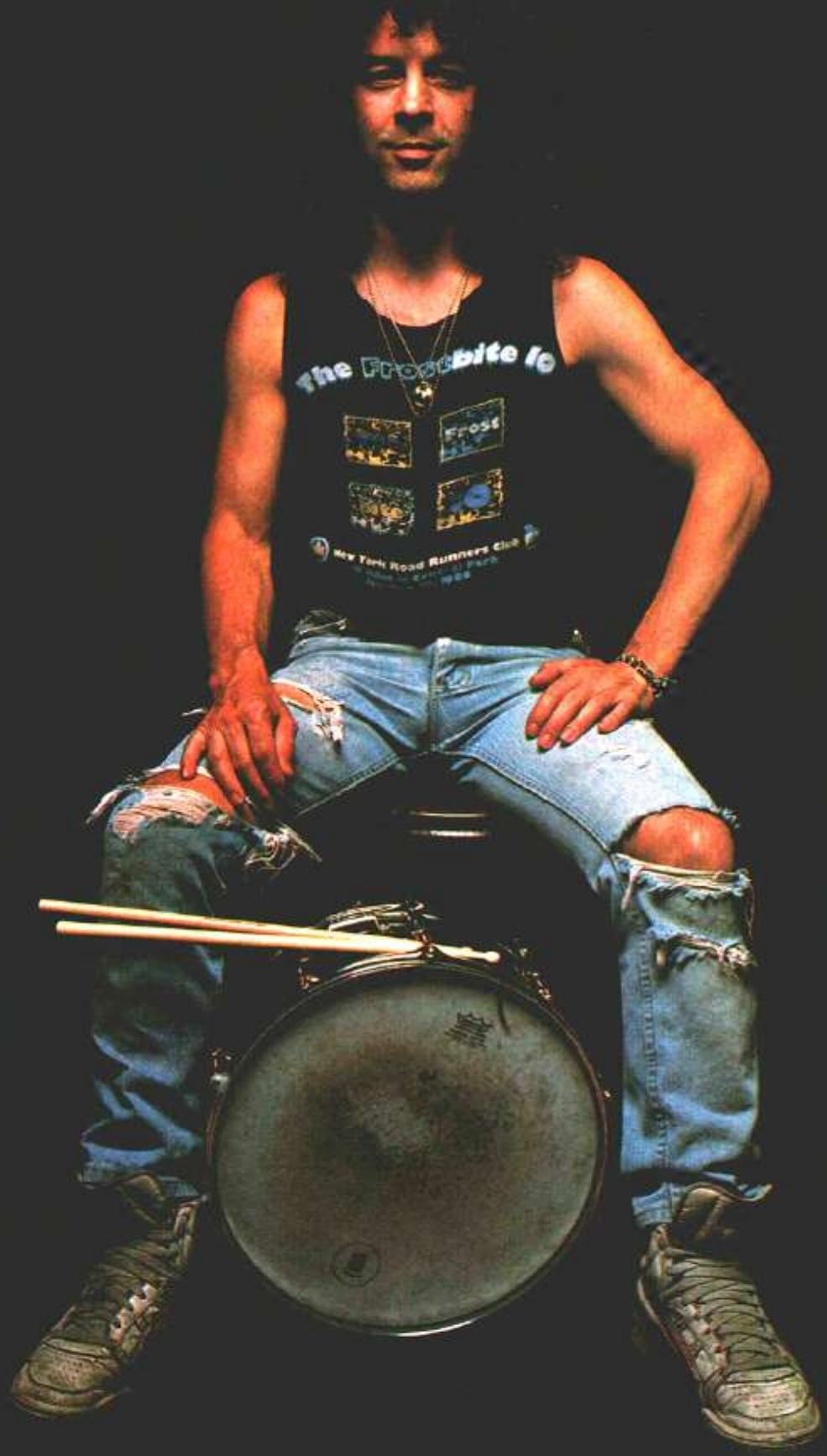
AB: Not really. My mother was a transposed city person who grew up in Boston, moved to Chicago, and was J. Edgar Hoover's secretary. My father was from Clayton. He was in the Merchant Marine. I don't know if they met in Chicago or if they met in Boston. All my father says is, "I chased her 'til she caught me." Then my father had a job with the Voice of America and I traveled all over the world before I was seven years old.

When we came back, he was an inventor for Stromberg-Carlson, and then he took a job at the television station in Watertown, about 20 miles inland from Clayton. Anyway, my parents weren't really farmers, but we owned a farm. I'm the oldest of seven—six boys and a girl—and to keep us out of trouble, my father had a tractor and all the necessary things to grow corn, tomatoes, string beans, and peas that we'd sell on a stand.

By the time I was getting into playing drums, I was hungry to relate to my peers and not be on a farm out in the middle of the woods. Me and my brother Joe, and my cousin and his cousin, and a second cousin to my cousin—everyone was related somehow—all got together and had a little five-piece band. We called ourselves the Regal Tones, in honor of the Royal Tones.

DF: What was your first drumset?

AB: At first, I borrowed one from the drummer in the high-school dance band and augmented it with stuff from school. Finally, I bought a used set with a 26" bass drum, with single-tension double heads, and a dual-tension wood Slingerland Radio King snare drum that was made in about 1939 and would be worth a fortune now. I had a little tiny hi-hat, where the cymbals were about 5", and a ride cymbal I later used for a frisbee, it was so bad, about an eighth of an inch thick, 13" wide. I paid for it on time, five dollars or something each week. Shortly thereafter, my father went to see relatives in Boston, and he stopped in Quincy at the Zildjian factory. He came back with a cymbal I still have and have used all my career. It sort of has an E-flat overtone, so it doesn't always work with all keys. I love cymbals. I have a lot of them, and I try to take care of them. That one has a little tiny crack in it, but I still use it. I was 12 when I got it. I never took it on the road, but I've used it on just about every recording. Eventually I got a hi-hat





and two tom-toms. One was a Ludwig and the other was a Kent, I think.

My drumset was all different colors—a brown snare, a black bass, a yellow tom-tom, and a blue tom-tom, so I got this golden-sparkle plastic, and I sanded it and glued it on the shells myself. That was my first real drumset. Oh, and I got rid of the 26" bass drum because you couldn't see me behind it, and it was huge and hard to control. There's a whole trick to controlling the sound of a bass drum. At the time, I didn't realize there was such a thing, and even if there was, I'd have to practice to get it down. So I got myself a 20" bass drum, and I used that set all during high school and college.

DF: What kind of formal training did you have?

AB: I was in every band I could possibly get in. In grammar school, I was in the little orchestral band, which I'm sure sounded really horrible. In high school, we had this amazing teacher. His name was Anthony Gurvin. Then, we had Frank Sacci, who'd played with Stan Kenton, Gerry Mulligan—a lot of heavies. When he took over the band, I was the dance band drummer, which was very fortunate. Now I had a guy who was totally into that. He's the one who started me playing with heavier sticks. I'd always played with the lightest sticks possible, a thin snare drum, and a very delicate style. He'd say, "C'mon, *hit* those things! Swing!"

DF: How did you meet Donald "Buck Dharma" Roeser?

AB: I got a college scholarship to Clarkson Institute of Technology in Potsdam. The whole freshman class had to go to this phys. ed. lecture. I saw him going in and I said, "Wow, man, you're the first guy I've seen who's as short as me!" Later we jammed, and that was that. Our first gig

was freshman year, at a fraternity party. This was 1965. The band was called the Disciples. We played "My Girl" and tunes by Paul Revere & the Raiders, Lee Dorsey, Stones, Beach Boys, Beatles. The next year, after we went down to Greenwich Village on weekends, we turned into the Travesty, a Blues Project copy band. By the end of the semester, we were getting money gigs and only one member of the band was still a student.

DF: How did the Soft White Underbelly evolve?

AB: Buck Dharma and I had already tried to get a band together in New York City and couldn't find jobs or musicians. I went to Chicago, joined a band that broke up in a couple of weeks, and lived in a band pad where everybody was coming by and dropping acid. It was 1967, a crazy time everywhere. Donald was living at home and had a construction job on Long Island, putting up aerials on Catholic schools or something. He wrote me saying, "Do you remember that terrible magazine, *Crawdaddy*? I met one of the writers, who says he's going to make me a star." We made two records for Elektra, the first as the Soft White Underbelly. The second was retitled the Stalk Forest Group. We'd played a gig at the Fillmore when Eric Bloom first joined as lead singer—opening for Jethro Tull and the Jeff Beck Group with Rod Stewart—that was so embarrassing we had to change our name.

DF: You had a lot of funny experiences in the early days. What happened when you backed up Chuck Berry?

AB: We were booked to open for Chuck Berry and back up Chuck Berry, who was opening for B.B. King at Generation, a club on 8th Street. We were supposed to do it for five days, but got canned the second night. There was no rehearsal—the stan-

dard thing. Chuck Berry was the best singer I'd ever played with at that point. He'd give us visual hand signals—play quiet, play louder. The leg coming down meant "here's the ending." He introduced a song that night that, two or three years later, went on to become a big, big smash. The first time I heard it, I was playing it. It was like, *what is this?* It was "My Ding-A-Ling." Afterwards, Paul Butterfield's band came down, and Al Kooper, Elvin Bishop, and Jimi Hendrix. The promoter said, "Can these guys jam on your stuff?" We said, "Ohhhh, do whatever! Sure, these guys are GODS."

We came back the next afternoon to get ready for the show and our brand new amps were blown, my hi-hat was broken, all this stuff was ruined. Elvin Bishop blew the amp; Hendrix would never do that. He came down and jammed with us a few months later—once on guitar, another time on bass—and he was always very respectful and very honest, the nicest cat you can imagine. So we asked the promoter for money to fix our stuff. He's like, "I lost my shirt last night, forget it." We rushed around—it was Saturday and all the music stores closed early—and got new amps, a new hi-hat, and played another good gig. At the end, Blood, Sweat & Tears came en masse and said, "Oh, can we use your equipment?" We said, "Sorry, we're taking it with us tonight." The promoter said, "If you don't let these guys play on your equipment, you're fired." So we let 'em use our stuff, stayed 'til the end of the jam to make sure nothing was destroyed, and the promoter said, "Now take your stuff and get out of here. I never want to see you again." The next night Chuck Berry had another band. Then Generation closed. Jimi Hendrix bought it and made it into Electric Ladyland.

DF: Probably not too many people know that Blue Oyster Cult was Jackson Browne's first back-up band.

AB: He was a folkie acoustic act who got a gig at Stony Brook College. We'd worked with a friend of his. He came out and stayed at our band house on the Island for three days and we rehearsed. I still have wild psychedelic versions of some of his tunes. He just kept shaking his head and saying, "This is not going to work."

DF: What was it like when you first started recording?

AB: The recording process is always a bit strange with any group, even if they're veterans. You rehearse, and you get used to hearing things without earphones. Then you go into the studio and put earphones on, and you feel isolated. I don't know what it is—lack of communication? That's disconcerting. It's just something you have to ignore after a while, the headphone thing. The first record we made for Elektra was very strange because we did some weird miking techniques. I had a 3 1/2" piccolo snare that was miked by a shotgun mic' about 20 feet above it pointing down. The bass drum was mounted horizontally, with an upside down cocktail-drum pedal. It was

a 26" bass, because I really missed my original drum. So I got another 26" with an inverted pedal. I was crazy. I thought it would sound good. As it turned out, it really sounded horrible. It was hard to play and the beater didn't hit the sweet spot of the bass drum.

DF: When did you start jumping over the drums and playing guitar on stage?

AB: We had this routine where we did a triple drum solo—Eric and Donald would come back and play the drums and I'd go out and sing "Fingertips, Part II" and jump around for a while. It was quite a routine actually, but after you've done it 150 times, it's enough. You're on your third time around the States, you've done it, everyone's seen it. One of the guys said, "Hey, you can play the guitar. Why don't we do five guitars? It's never been done." We realized that people like to see unusual things, like a bunch of people really hamming it up for the crowd.

DF: Who influenced you in terms of playing?

AB: Well, the Ventures' Howie Johnson influenced me very much. After that, the guy in the Blues Project sort of influenced me—but that was briefly. Then I started getting into some of the blues cats, like Francis Clay, who played on "The Thrill Is Gone" for B.B. I met him when he was playing with Muddy Waters—terrific drummer, great posture. He played loud and simple. When a fill came, he just put it in. He was a very fatherly kind of guy, too. I dug him a lot; it was a personal thing as well.

Then on our first tour after we were signed to Columbia, we were the middle group between Mahavishnu, with Billy Cobham, and the Byrds. I had heard the acoustic Mahavishnu, and I thought he was going out there with this acoustic music. I thought, "Oh great, we'll come out there, flatten 'em with the heavy metal, and the Byrds'll do the hits." I didn't bother to catch the opening act the first two or three shows, which was good for me, because that made those two or three shows pretty good. Then I made the mistake of watching, and I couldn't follow Cobham. Nobody had ever heard that before; it was too much. I would actually get sick before I went on. It's a good thing they didn't have vocals and didn't play in 4/4 time, 'cause they really would have killed the audience.

I became a Cobham freak. The next two or three albums, I started playing double bass. Then I started overplaying all the time. Some people still like some of those recordings. Especially *Tyranny And Mutation*—there's crazy, crazy stuff. The quad remix is pretty wild. After that, I started settling into Bonham, who's still a very big influence. Live, he blew me away. The biggest influence, I have to say, is Peter Gabriel. Not Phil Collins, but the stuff Phil Collins did on Peter Gabriel's third album. Even now, when I hear it I salivate. The next one Gabriel put out was okay, but I'm not a big fan of putting drum machines on records. I think drum machines can be a



useful learning tool or an interesting toy on a track, but they really do not project the primitive physical feeling you get from a real drummer.

DF: Yet you use machines all the time.

AB: Writing, I seldom play live drums. It's usually a drum machine. I'll find something that suits the tune and let it go. If you have a drummer programming it, he's going to know what to do. A lot of people program drum machines who don't know anything about logical sounding drum parts. It's an illusion with a drum machine, so to really work well with it, you have to make the illusion seem real. I suppose they'll find other ways to start using drum machines—to generate sounds or augment your sounds. Maybe they'll find a way to imitate the dynamic of a real drummer. The drumming on that Michael Jackson album, *Thriller*, for instance—that mega album, the most popular album in the universe—did not really knock me out. It sounds thin and tinny. Wimpy. But people weren't buying the album for the drumming.

DF: Do you feel that with teaching, you're entering into a new phase of your career?

AB: With teaching, I feel that maybe I'm giving a little bit back to the music. Instead of just taking, I'm giving back. And I really feel like I'm helping other drummers get better. And I see the results; for instance, one of my students came back and said he'd just practiced for the first time with his band since he started taking lessons from me. I'd just helped him understand the things he'd been doing and showed him how to improve his form to get a better sound. When he went back to his band, everybody commented on how much better his drumming was. He said that the sessions he had with me had a lot to do with it. And I think so, because I showed him concrete things to help him get a better sound, and he started using them. But the most important thing is practice. If you practice this stuff, you'll get it. If you don't practice it, you won't. One of the hardest things for my students to get together is to have a place and a time to practice.

DF: A lot of people think rock 'n' roll is just bashing away. They don't seem to realize it takes the kind of discipline you would ap-

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inside UFIP

Exotic pleasures sometimes hide in strange places. Recently I visited the Italian Cymbal Manufacturers Association in Pistoia, Italy. (In Italian, the company's name is Unione Fabbricanti Italiani Piatti Musicali, hence the acronym "UFIP.") I was touring the factory with the president of the company, Luigi Tronci, when an unexpected visit from one of his salesmen forced him to leave me alone. "Why don't you wait in here," he said, opening the door to a room full of various UFIP cymbals: hi-hats, rides, swish-sizzles, crashes, and China-type cymbals, plus other percussion instruments such as chimes, bells, crotales, and other bronze objects too numerous to mention.

I picked up a drumstick and wandered around, touching this, tapping that, when I came upon a 47" gong. As I picked up the mallet, images of oriental palaces came to mind.

No matter where I touched it, a different sound with a different tone emerged. When I hit it hard, the sound crashed, lowering to a vibrant hum throughout the room. When I hit it rhythmically, the sounds mixed together in a cocktail of vibrating sounds.

I was so lost in my fascinating encounter with the gong that I didn't even notice Tronci standing behind me. "Do you like it? It's a symphonic gong made of a single piece of fused bronze, hand hammered till it reaches the form and sound characteristics required of a truly symphonic instrument."

"What's the cost?" I asked, thinking I'd like one to put in my bedroom.

"This is our largest. It sells for \$1,650.00."

I reluctantly hung up the mallet. It was time to get back to our story. For this isn't a story about gongs; rather, it's the story of a small, historic artisan cymbal factory as it struggles to run a race against the mass production and slick marketing techniques of the giant cymbal-producing manufacturers.

Following Tronci from the office building to the factory, little did I realize that I was about to witness an operation combining centuries-old craftsmanship with modern technology. The result is the production of quality percussion instruments geared for both the contemporary drummer and the classical percussionist.

The atmosphere in the factory was unexpectedly calm as nine cymbalsmiths were casting and pouring the bubbly hot liquid into rotating cymbal molds. Tronci smiled like a cook about to tell you how the dish carrying his name is prepared. "We make our own fusion called B20." He pointed to four 260-pound slabs of copper against the wall. "The copper comes from Chile. B20 is made of 80% copper and 20% tin, which comes from Vietnam. The metals are melted together in gas ovens. The semi-professional, economical cymbals we make are made with B8, which is 92% copper and 8% tin."

He led me around the room, explaining the five phases of the UFIP cymbal production.

A cymbalsmith pouring the liquid hot metal into a rotating cymbal mold.

by Jon McInnes



Phase I

When the metal is liquid hot, it is pulled from the ovens with heavy ladels and poured into the cymbal molds rotating at 1,000 spins per minute. Tronci explained that the rotating molds are a unique method of cymbal making called the "rotocasting method."

"Rotocasting was invented 10 years ago by the firm Zanchi, ex-partners in UFIP," he said. "It took 14 years of study to perfect the system. Before, the cymbals were simply poured into standing iron molds or stamped out from uniform rolls of copper.

"Rotocasting permits us to work with purer, more compact, and harder metals," Tronci continued. "The metal impurities are pushed to the exterior of the plate by centrifugal force. We believe the system of rotocasting not only gives the cymbals a more decisive sound but makes them much more resistant as well."

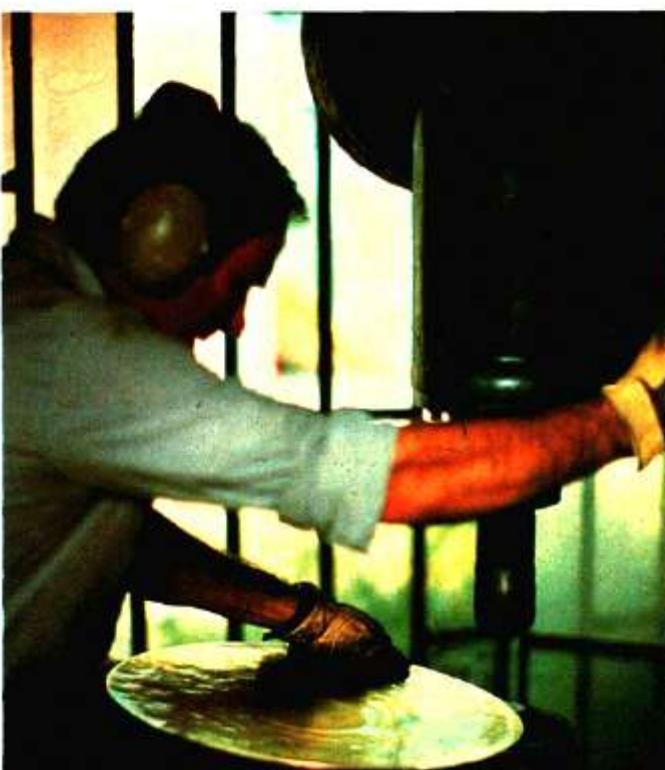
Phase II

The cymbals are taken from the molds and put into an oven where they are "re-cooked" at 600 degrees until cherry red. Then they are pulled out and submerged in tanks of cold, running water. Tronci said this thermic treatment tempers the cymbals, permitting them to be worked further. While tempering is necessary to make most metals harder, with bronze metals—in particular B20—it serves to make the metal softer and pliable.

Phase III

The tempered cymbals are then taken from the casting room to the turret lathe shop. We closed the door on the furnace room and watched as the cymbals were fixed on the lathes. With hand-held chisels, the craftsmen shaved the rough crust

A cymbal being hammered on the hammer press. Hammering gives final shape to the cymbal and creates a compact molecular structure for better sonority.



off the cymbals. Slowly the lucid bronze colors emerged from the dull metal plates.

Phase IV

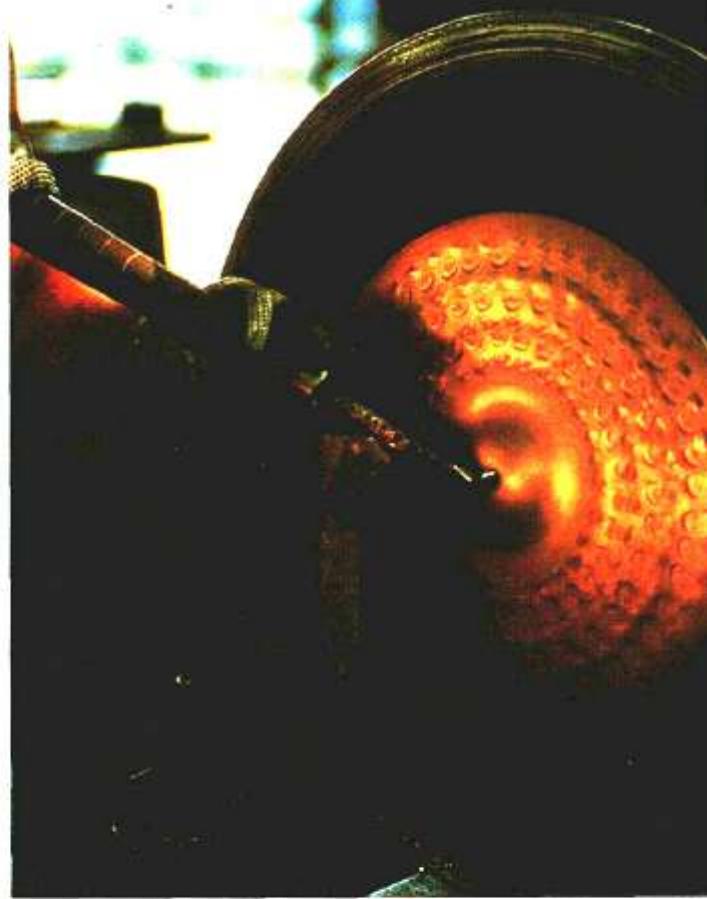
We left the hum of the lathe room to enter another room where a man sat on a chair before a hammer press. Here the shaved cymbals are hammered into shape with an electric hammer at a pressure of 125 pounds per square inch. Each cymbal receives hundreds of hits (depending on the size of the cymbal). Tronci said not only does the hammering give the final shape to the cymbal, it also serves to give the cymbal a compact molecular structure necessary for the creation of top sonorous qualities.

Phase V

After getting the daylights beaten out of them, the cymbals are passed back to the turret lathe shop. Tronci said that at this point the cymbals are almost ready to be played. But one more shaving is needed on the lathe. After being hammered, the cymbal is rigid and carries a rather crude sound. The second spin on the lathe is machine regulated and serves to give the cymbal a final peeling. Little, if any, of the metal is removed. The final shaving makes the cymbal softer and more harmonic. It removes obvious hammer marks, and it also ensures that each cymbal has the same weight and thickness as the one before it.

Tronci wanted me to take note of the second shaving. "A common criticism is that hand-crafted cymbals have weight differences. But the second automatic shaving on the lathe brings all the cymbals down to the same weight."

The cymbals are then stacked on pallets and left to age like bottles of racked wine. Tronci said that in a few weeks each cymbal would be given a final examination, stamped with the company logo, and shipped out.



Shaving the cymbals by hand on the lathe.

We went back to the offices, and I complimented Tronci on UFIP's smooth, efficient, and seemingly natural operation. Tronci waved off the compliment and explained that cymbal making in Pistoia goes back to the time of the Etruscans. For them, making cymbals wasn't just a job, but a way of life.

It wasn't by accident that cymbal making developed in this small town, 40 miles east of Florence. Long before Christ, the Etruscans were casting and working metals in this area. Iron and bronze shops were operating in Pistoia right through the dark ages. If you lived in the area and wanted something in metal, you went to Pistoia. In the 18th century, Pistoia was famous for its church bells and bronze factories. Church organs, famous throughout Europe, were built in Pistoia by the family Agati Tronci—direct ancestors of the current president of UFIP.

UFIP was born in 1929 through the union of the artisan families Tronci, Biasei, and Zanchi. These families owned the metal-casting shops that produced Turkish-type cymbals and other percussion instruments. Rather than compete with each other, they decided to unite and create a single company. They began by producing imitation Turkish cymbals, the kind that were originally produced in Istanbul by the Armenian family Zildjian. Even UFIP has to take off its hat to the man who originally put drummers and cymbals together in the western world.

At the turn of the century, Avedis Zildjian believed the musical expressions created through cymbals could catch on in the USA. He separated himself from his family, left Istanbul, and began making cymbals in America. With the birth of jazz, cymbals became popular overnight. Then came bebop in the 1940s. With bebop the cymbal was given the role of keeping time. From that moment on, the cymbal had a leading role in modern music.

In Italy, before World War II, even though UFIP had been making cymbals for years, the cymbal was an underrated instrument. At the time, the cymbals were small, 10-14 inches in diameter, and were used almost exclusively in marching bands. But immediately after the war, people wanted to forget the misery and start enjoying the present. American music was popular. The request for cymbals was hot and heavy. Large orders, even from countries as far away as the USA, were backlogged, waiting to be filled.

The golden years of UFIP came in the 1950s when the Italian handcrafted products were appreciated for their style and quality. But the good times didn't last forever. The cymbal craftsmen soon had to begin competing with mass production. Low prices achieved through lightning-quick distribution techniques and ambitious marketing campaigns of the big cymbal producers soon pushed UFIP into a corner. Today, UFIP is fighting its way out of that corner. While the company isn't contending for the heavyweight title, it is still struggling to be ranked amongst the best in the cymbal-making category.

Today, UFIP remains a small company with 12 employees. It turns out about 250 cymbals a day with a total yearly sales of \$1 million. The company doesn't want to grow to compete. Their motto is: "Quantity compromises quality." And quality is the ace up their sleeve.

"We're the number-one cymbal maker in Italy," Tronci said. "But Italy only has 100,000 drummers compared to millions of drummers in the USA. We're the second-biggest-selling cymbal in France and Holland, and third in Germany."

"But we're in the little league when compared to the big industries like Pearl in Japan, Paiste in Europe, and Zildjian in the USA. Still, we're optimistic about our future. Sure, the big industries will win with their low prices in the beginning. But there's a growing movement today to return to quality. People will pay more to have the best. Now that's the right kind of attitude to have, and it's the right idea when it comes to cymbals, too."

Tronci picked up an anonymous cymbal from one of the leading cymbal makers, balanced it on his index finger, and tapped it a couple times with a drumstick he had on his desk. Then he picked up a UFIP cymbal and played it the same way. "Hear the difference?" he smiled. "The best cym-



Luigi Tronci - president of UFIP

bal is the one with the highest range of notes. Guess which one it is! Every drummer should make this comparison test. Handmade cymbals have more notes than industrial cymbals. That's what we're trying to achieve. If a drummer appreciates this and wants the best, he's going to have to check us out.

"Unfortunately, economic realities make it almost impossible for an artisan company like ours to remain faithful to the ancient art of cymbal making. The top bands in the world should be using UFIP cymbals. That would help our position on the market for sure. But they prefer the famous names and the sponsorships that only large industrial cymbal makers can afford to offer."

Tronci is obviously frustrated with the buying preferences of today's drummers. But even if the world should cave in tomorrow, UFIP will remain a popular choice amongst classical percussionists. Perhaps a major rock group never emerged from Italy. But this Mediterranean country remains the capital of lyrical music: Percussion instruments for international symphonic orchestras is UFIP's main source of bread and butter.

"UFIP has forged custom-made instruments at the request of composers. Puccini had us make a series of bronze bells of various notes for his opera *Turandot*. As a result, we're the only ones making those bells today. Want to play *Turandot*? You have to pay us a visit to play it right."

Tronci said that the company is trying to cover the entire arc of a percussion market in continual expansion. "In the past ten

years we have enlarged our sector of percussion instruments. We're making tubular bells, bell trees, marching cymbals, Tibetan bells, winding chimes, sixtrees and burman gongs, tam pangs, ogororos, tam tams, falt bells, Burma bells, and crotales."

What will be the future of UFIP? Will they fold, as 70% of the small, artisan companies in Italy have recently been forced to do? Can a small percussion production shop survive the corporate realities of today's market?

Tronci sighed. "We're fighting to sell handmade cymbals for about the price of industrially produced cymbals. We're even producing an economical line of cymbals called Kashian for the semi-professional and beginning drummers. Just check out our price list. We're not that much more expensive, but you get so much more for the money."

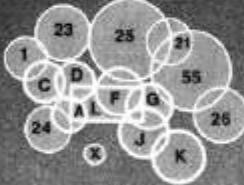
"I think there's room for everyone in this market. At least there should be room for low-priced mass-produced cymbals, and for the higher priced, quality cymbals. Theoretically, everyone should be able to have a piece of the cake."

"But I think this all depends now on the professional drummers. It's so important what they use when they play. Do they recognize the quality and difference of handmade cymbals? If they do, then they should show it by using them on stage. Professional drummers have the responsibility of teaching the younger drummers the difference in sound between machine-made cymbals and those made by master craftsmen. Our destiny is in their hands."

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Danny Gottlieb

PLAYING PAISTE 12 YEARS



BT

DANNY GOTTLIEB

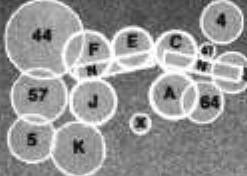
... In my case, the cymbals are probably the most important part of the drum kit and are probably the center of my individuality as a drum performer... I find that with the combination of the 3000 and the Formula 602 Flat Rides, I can come up with a total signature... Paiste cymbals have a sound that I identify with for my complete individuality...

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- 6-3000 16" crash
- 7-3000 17" crash
- 8-3000 18" crash
- 9-3000 20" crash
- 10-3000 18" power crash
- 11-3000 20" power crash
- 12-3000 14" medium hi-hat

Rod Morgenstein

PLAYING PAISTE 10 YEARS



ROD MORGESTIN

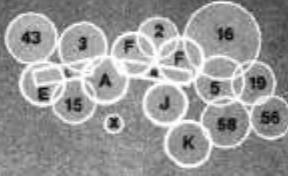
I like the fact that there is always experimentation going on, not just coming up with one good thing and then it sort of becomes a dinosaur... there are always new things coming along... and there are so many new things that I haven't even seen... that's a good sign...

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- 18-3000 22" china
- 19-3000 RUDE 17" crash/ride
- 20-3000 RUDE 14" heavy hi-hat
- 21-3000 REFLECTOR 17" thin crash
- 22-3000 REFLECTOR 18" thin crash
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- 28-2000 17" crash
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- 30-2000 12" splash
- 31-2000 14" crash
- 32-2000 18" crash
- 33-2000 16" crash
- 34-2000 18" mellow china
- 35-2000 18" china
- 36-2000 20" china
- 37-2000 14" medium hi-hat
- 38-2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 8" splash

- 39-2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 13" sound edge hi-hat
- 40-2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 20" mellow china
- 41-2000 SOUND REFLECTIONS 20" power ride
- 42-1000 RUDE 10" splash
- 43-RUDE 20" ride/crash
- 44-RUDE 23" ride/crash
- 45-RUDE 26" china
- 46-602 12" paperthin/2" heavy
- 47-602 11" splash
- 48-602 10" heavy bell

CONTROL TEAM

Jim Keltner

Paul Wertico

Doane Perry

Will Kennedy

PLAYING PAISTE 6 YEARS



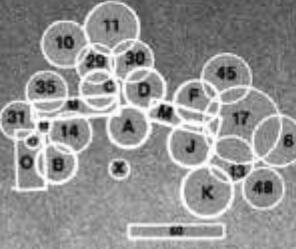
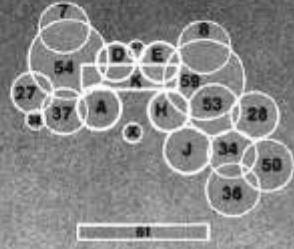
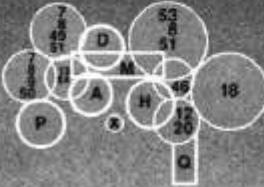
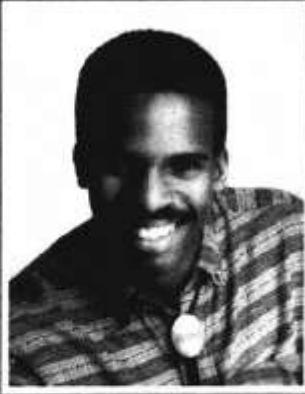
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53—602 21" heavy
54—602 22" thin flat ride
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57—SOUND CREATION 18" dark china
58—SOUND CREATION 20" dark china
59—SOUND CREATION 22" dark flat ride
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61—PERCUSSION SET

62—CUP CHIMES—#4 & 2
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D—12" mounted tom
E—13" mounted tom
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G—15" mounted tom
H—14" floor tom

I—15" floor tom
J—16" floor tom
K—18" floor tom
L—20" bass tom
M—22" bass tom
N—24" bass tom
O—electronic drum pads
P—14" roto tom
Q—electronic drum pads & sampler
X—drum throne

The statements in this ad are based on interviews conducted with the artists on their playing, cymbals, sounds, and on Paiste. Write to: Paiste America, 460 Atlas St., Brea, CA 92621 and ask for the ones you'd like. Mention Dept. USA1. Please include \$3 for printing, postage and handling.

by Daniel J. Lauby

Books And Lessons: "Do I Really Need Them?"

There are many drummers today who feel they would not benefit from formal lessons from a qualified, local teacher. Most of them have been playing for several years on their own and feel reasonably confident about their playing. Some feel that they would like to study with someone, but are afraid that the lessons would be "all book" and no "practical" study. Since most of these drummers are older and have had little reading experience, books worry them and they feel lessons would be a waste of time and money. So some questions arise: "Do I need to learn to read?" "Is counting really so important?" "Do I need formal lessons, or can I just pick it up and 'groove'?" These questions are asked by many drummers; if you are one, consider the following before you make any decisions.

It is hard to express just how important it is for you to learn to read music. Let me begin by saying, *you need it!* If you are one of those drummers who asks, "Do I need to learn to read music?" you should also ask yourself, "Did I need to go to school?" Okay, so maybe your scholastic performance wasn't so hot, or you never had a date, or maybe you were often mugged for your milk money. But try to imagine not being able to read this article—or anything else, for that matter. School taught you to read and write, to analyze and understand the language you speak so that you could function successfully in society. That is the obvious, practical side of learning to read and write. But school gave you something else, something much more valuable and even more practical. School gave you a stronger *mind!*

When you learned to analyze your language through reading and writing, you also developed a greater capacity to think, reason, and create. With a strong mind, you can now change the course of your life. Learning to read music works in the same way for you as a drummer as school worked for you as a student. There is no ceiling to the success potential of the drummer who can read. But for the musically illiterate musician, that potential is diminished. Perhaps you are saying to yourself, "Learning to read written language is important because we need that skill in life, but drummers rarely read music on the job." This is true. However, remember that your primary job as a drumset player is to *keep time*. If rhythms are wrong, if the tune doesn't feel right, or if the time rushes or drags, the responsibility falls on the drummer. The ability to read prevents mistakes in these areas. How? Because if you can

read, you can count! Drummers communicate to listeners primarily through the power of rhythm. Therefore, it is extremely important for every drummer to know how to *count*.

We learn how to count music by reading music. On the practical side, this is the most important reason there is for learning to read music. Reading teaches *counting*, and every drummer's career depends, sooner or later, on his or her ability to count. *The Haskell Harr Drum Methods* are among the most widely used foundational books. They are designed to teach drummers to read and play the basic rhythms and rudiments. (Without exception, every drummer should have the basic rudiments together.) But this is not the primary goal of these books. On page 12, Mr. Harr writes, "It is very important to have a method of *counting time*, to develop and maintain a perfect sense of rhythm." Harr did not say that reading develops perfect time, nor did he say you must become an excellent reader. Harr said that *counting* develops perfect time. The book then provides basic exercises toward developing the art of counting. Counting is the primary goal of Harr's text. It is no accident that students who are trained by Haskell Harr's Drum Method always seem to have an exceptional sense of rhythm, provided they have counted aloud and tapped their foot as instructed.

Through counting, the mind becomes strong; it becomes like an absorbent sponge soaking up all kinds of ideas and rhythms from your own thoughts and from the musicians around you. You will become somewhat psychic in that you will be able to pre-hear stops and breaks, perfect fills and solos, chord changes, and perfect cymbal changes from hi-hat to ride cymbal—all in advance. You won't need to hear tunes over and over again to learn them; once will be enough if you can count. You will become more creative, always discovering new sounds and ideas for the world to hear. Your basic time will become rock solid. Click tracks will become your friends and you won't fear them anymore. Counting through reading will enable you to put a name on every idea that pops into your mind. You'll be able to retain and quickly recall your ideas, because you will have put them into a counting system. Also, through counting you will be able to communicate your ideas to the rest of the band. If these are skills you have been looking for, you'll find them—not by playing to more records or jamming with more bands,

but through mastering counting and strengthening your creative mind.

Physically speaking, just how does counting work all of these miracles? Well, it is an anatomical fact that the speech center in your brain can have authority over motor nerves. In other words, whatever you say with your mouth and reinforce with your "will" must inevitably happen in your playing. But you have to involve speech. You have to speak your intended idea *with feeling* before you play it. In other words, count or sing your intended idea *with authority*, using the same feel and tones as it will sound when you play it. This type of counting will develop a powerful mind, totally in command of your limbs.

Do you need formal lessons, or can you just pick this up on your own? If at all possible, take lessons. It is never too late to start. Seek out a competent, dedicated instructor and do it right. A good teacher will have a balanced program of reading, tapping, improvisation, working with clicks, etc. Even if you are an advanced player, lessons will be worthwhile. Keep in mind that, even if you take lessons, you are still—to a degree—self-taught, because drumset is an improvisatory instrument. This means that drummers make their parts up as they go. A teacher can guide you and expose you to new ideas, but on the job, you will still play whatever pops into your mind at any particular moment. Your soul comes through, not the teacher's. Because we make it up as we go, it is important to get some guidance. Learn to read, learn to count, learn to listen, learn to create and express. Do not avoid lessons because you are afraid of books or because you think you don't need to read. Take the lessons. Master counting and you will master your mind; master your mind and you master your playing.

When you're playing drumset and reading from a book or a chart, remember that you should not necessarily play precisely what is written. Music is not that restrictive. You should play to the interpretation of the music that will be in your mind through counting with feeling. If you are reading music in a band, don't stay glued to the page. Use your ears. Your ears should always supersede your eyes, because music is an aural art. If it sounds good, do it. Since the drumset is improvisatory, remain flexible and don't feel tied down or restricted by the written music. In fact, the written music should make you secure; it's a foundation that allows you the freedom to build and create within the written page.



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by Simon Goodwin

Making People Dance

There can be nothing more demoralizing than sitting on stage and looking out over a large expanse of empty dance floor, when your band has been booked to play for *dancing*. Assuming that there is an audience there, they are *supposed* to be dancing, and their failure to do so seems to reflect unfavorably on your function. The people who book you for the gig obviously expect people to dance, so the chances are that they won't be too pleased with you.

That's the situation on the face of it, but we all know that it isn't necessarily as simple as that. Obviously the music has to be *danceable*, but it must also be the right type of music for the particular audience. Different age groups, ethnic groups, or other groupings of people with specific attitudes can love one form of music and *hate* another. (Remember the scene in *The Blues Brothers* when the band is booked into a country and western club? In this case, "The Brothers" were able to adapt, which is what every gigging band should be prepared to do. But it is possible to take this so far. After all, we only see Elwood, Jake, and Co. do one country number. How did they cope with the rest of the evening?)

It may be that the audience doesn't place the same importance on dancing as does the club manager. (Managers like people to get hot and thirsty, so that they can increase their takings.) The social atmosphere in a room in which music is being played is an important factor for bringing people in—before they even think about dancing. Often that atmosphere is all that people are looking for. They might really appreciate the music, but may just not be in the habit of dancing in order to show that appreciation. If you are receiving more than just *polite* applause, you know that they like what you are doing.

All of the above goes to show that it can be factors beyond your control that are keeping the dance floor uninhabited. But it is no good taking the attitude that you are playing perfectly good music and that if the audience don't want to dance to it, then they are just tasteless or ignorant. In order to sell their product, musicians must be prepared to analyze the needs of their customers. Obviously the *rhythm* is an all-important factor. When a strong, motivat-

ing rhythm is played at a comfortable tempo, the basic requirement for dancing is satisfied. Some people are so determined to dance that you could set a drum machine going and keep them at it for hours. (Producers of disco records have made a lot of money by doing little more than that!) On the other hand, a lot of dancers are much more demanding. They want tunes that they know and like before they will venture onto the floor.

It's always difficult to know exactly what a particular group of people will know and like (unless it's a Top-40 crowd), but experience will make you aware of a few safe bets. Most bands have some "get 'em on the floor" numbers up their sleeves. Remember these are not necessarily songs that the *band* likes (often the reverse is true), but instead are numbers that an audience is likely to respond to. To underscore the point that some people only respond to familiar tunes: It is often noticeable that people will get up to dance when they recognize a certain melody line or "hook," while the same song's introduction can be completely ignored. I have even seen people waiting on the dance floor when one number is finished, listening to the intro for the next one before dancing again when the melody starts. Also, if you segue from a familiar number to an unfamiliar one—even though it may have an identical feel—people will often leave the floor.

When playing familiar numbers, it is worthwhile to check that your tempos are the same as those of the well-known recorded versions (unless these tempos have proven to be less danceable than others). Otherwise, the audience is likely to dislike your performance of a particular number—often without even realizing why. Numbers with changes in tempo should usually be avoided, or these changes should be "ironed out" to give a steady rhythmic flow. (However, there are exceptions. One of my band's "get 'em on the floor" tunes is "New York New York"—slow section and all. It seldom misses!)

Before leaving the subject of tempos, we must remember the "strict-tempo" customers who require every song within a particular style to be at a particular tempo, regardless of any musical or "established recorded version" considerations. (There are "official" tempi for the various dances.) If you are likely to have to play for this type of audience, it is well worth having a metronome and a list of settings to turn to for support. The problem arises when you get a few fanatical strict-tempo dancers mixed in with a casual dancing crowd: The for-

mer demand things at their special competition tempi, while the latter find them impossible to dance to. So *either* way, the band is wrong!

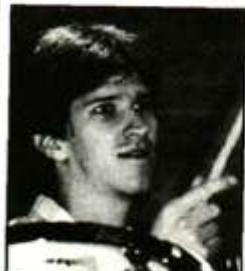
Now we come to that all-important question: When it comes to making people dance, what do we, as drummers, need to contribute? The first consideration has to be establishing the right tempo, whether you count in or pick it up from someone else. It is necessary to be aware of the dancers' needs at all times. If a tempo seems to be uncomfortable for them, you might try adjusting it. If this is likely to upset other band members, it is certainly something that should be discussed before the number is performed again.

Whatever the type of music you are playing, give the dancers a clear "beat" to follow. This generally means playing at a volume that is clearly audible (but not overbearing), and avoiding overplaying that might confuse the dancers' perception of where the time is. Remember that musicians, because of their experience and training, can feel a rhythm that is only hinted at or highly embellished; "normal people" usually need to have it dictated to them. Sometimes it may prove necessary to adapt a perfectly acceptable (in musical terms) drum part, just to suit the type of people you are playing for. For instance, I used to enjoy playing the "one-drop" style of reggae drumming, and would incorporate it in the reggae-style hit tunes we played. That was until someone suggested that the predominantly white, middle-aged audiences we were playing for weren't able to relate to that rhythmic feel. I fell back on the trusty old backbeat, and the response to the numbers was instantly better.

Yes, it is disappointing when you have to be less adventurous in your playing for the sake of a dancing audience, but it goes with the territory. Throughout the ages, composers and musicians have needed to come to terms with the idea that they are producing music to dance to, rather than just to be listened to, and have had to work within the constraints involved. However, when you think about it, the *positive* side to all this is very strong: Many more bands are employed playing for people to dance than for people to just sit and listen. Also, what more positive response can you have to your music than crowds of people wanting to get up and move to it? I introduced this article by conjuring up the vision of an empty dance floor. Let me leave you with this thought: Imagine that dance floor packed with people. Isn't it all worth it?

ddrum

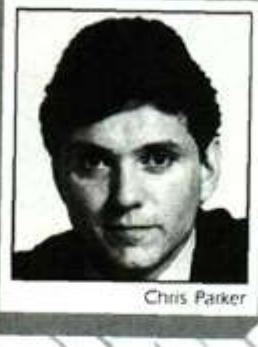
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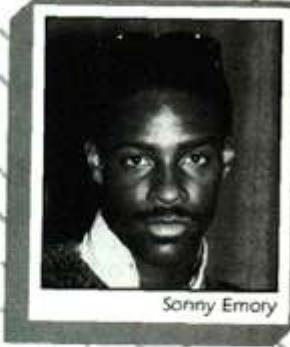
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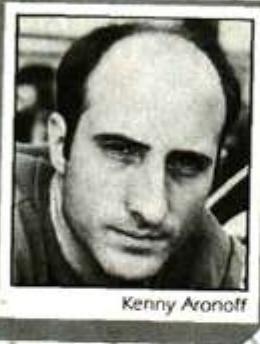
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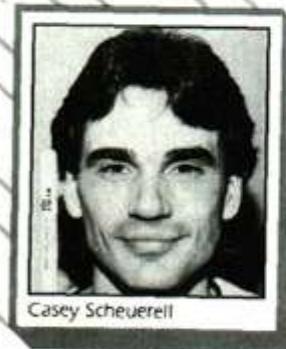
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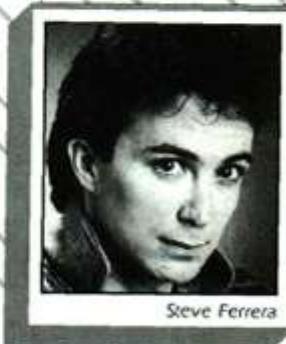
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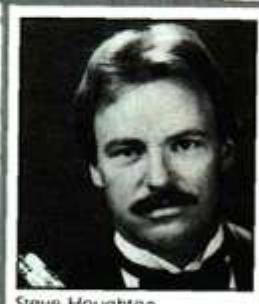
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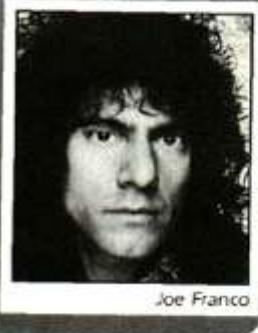
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Playing Drum Machines With Drumsticks

"Play buttons"—a misnomer if ever there was one. You know what I'm talking about: those little squares of plastic growing out of the face of your drum machine. They don't look anything at all like drums, not even electronic drums. Yet the user manual always states that you're supposed to "play" them. Maybe a keyboard player or a typist can "play" them, but I can't. In fact, whenever I want to feel a little spastic (that is, more so than usual), I just walk up to my drum machine and start hitting the buttons. Play buttons, simply put, are not designed for drummers; they are designed for guitarists, computer hacks, the guys with the synths, and that most curious of creatures—the North American Table Beater (heard on lunch counters across the land). Unless you have an exceedingly light touch, laser-like accuracy, and don't mind repair bills, I don't recommend using your favorite pair of 7As on those buttons. If you've been following along with our past discussions, you know that the obvious way around this hurdle is via MIDI. MIDI will allow you to have the convenience of the drum machine with the comfort of a normal drumkit.

Any reasonably powerful drum machine will allow you to access its sounds (and usually other functions as well) through MIDI. All that is required is a set of drum pads (or acoustic drums with triggers) and a trigger-to-MIDI converter. If you've ever shopped around for a drum machine, you know that there is a wide variety of units on the market, ranging in price from a few hundred up to a few thousand dollars. The capabilities of these machines vary as much as their respective prices. The question, then, basically is: "As a drummer, what do I need from a drum machine?" There are two divergent paths that you can follow: (1) You can use the machine in the "standard" way (i.e., never touching your drumsticks), and program the beastie by hand. This means, of course, that you never *really* "play" it; in essence, the machine "plays" by itself. Or (2) You can use the unit as a voice module, play it in real time, and (if you need to program it) you do your programming with your sticks. (We'll leave the sequencing stuff out for now.) In the first case, your requirements are probably pretty much the same as most people's: How many patterns, how many songs, how do I sync it, what's the maximum resolution, etc. In the second instance, song/pat-

tern/resolution questions may be trivial, and the important things may be: Can I recall mixes, how flexible is note assignment, can I detune sounds, and so forth.

There is no law that says that you must program in patterns and sequences for a drum machine to be useful! Considering the prices and capabilities of some of the newer units, they make excellent expanders for larger systems and can prove to be very cost effective as the core of a smaller setup. In such a system you may *never* need to enter a pattern or sequence! As a matter of fact, a pad/drum machine combo offers quite a bit for the student, not the least of which is realistic sound with a volume control.

Okay, so there you are in Ralph's Mondo Music Emporium, surrounded by two dozen of the latest and greatest in the realm of drum machines. Which one makes the best voice module? First and foremost, *listen* to them. It doesn't matter how many features a model has, if you don't like the way it sounds, don't buy it. If you do, it's a reasonable bet that you'll never be happy with it. If you're looking for realistic sounds, make sure that you compare units through a reasonable set of full-range loudspeakers and not through the bass cabinet that the salesman could hook up quickly. If technical specifications are available, look for machines that have high sample rates and high resolution. If you're a stickler for a bright, strong top end, you'll want a sample rate of at least 40kHz. It is possible with certain hardware tricks to get a bright sound with lower sample rates, so don't treat this as an iron rule. On the resolution side, the general idea is "more bits is better." Many drum machines use 12-bit encoding these days, with a few of the newer units using 16 bits (as do CDs). Some less expensive units, and some of the older guys on the block, utilize a compressed 8-bit format. Compressed formats offer lower memory usage, and hence lower cost, with reasonable dynamic range. Their one downfall is that the noise level tracks the drum sound level. This is kind of like getting a burst of hiss every time you strike a drum. This effect is more prominent on sounds with less high-frequency content (like a kick or floor tom), and often goes unnoticed on sounds like snares or a cabasa.

The other side of the sounds coin is quantity. Does the unit you're considering have

a wide enough variety of sounds to create the kit that you're after? First looks can be very deceiving here, so be careful. For example, model A may have three different tom sounds (high, medium, and low), while model B may only have two (acoustic and electronic). It may work out that model B is the best choice here, assuming that you can change the pitch of these sounds. Pitch change was once found only on the most expensive machines, but today can be found on units in the \$500 range. It is possible to produce three or four toms from one tom sample with this feature. Not all pitch changers are alike, though. There are a few different ways of producing a pitch shift, and they affect the sound in different ways. Of major interest is the range of pitch shifting and the number of steps available. For natural sounds, you probably won't need more than one half octave of shift up and down. Pitch shifting generally works best with simpler sounds like toms, and is less effective with cymbal sounds. (In some cases the word "grotesque" comes to mind.) For pitch shifting to be really useful, you need some form of facility to copy sounds. In this way you can copy a tom sound to several "locations" and shift the pitch of each of them differently—the net result being a set of toms. Some machines also offer control over the decay—or length—of a sound. Again, it may be possible to copy a sound to several "locations" and individually adjust decay (for example, to produce a choked cymbal). Okay, what's this "location" business, eh? Well, this is where the different design philosophies of electronics companies really show up.

If you were a designer, how would you get a given sound out "into the real world"? The most straightforward solution is: Give each sound a play button and an output jack. This works well for small machines, but it runs up against a few obstacles. When you make a machine with a lot of sounds, that means lots of buttons and lots of output converters, amplifiers, and jacks. Each output path is referred to as a voice. Do not confuse output jacks with voices. You see, in an effort to reduce cost, manufacturers use a variety of techniques to *share* output circuitry across sounds. Usually, you must somehow assign a sound to a play button (i.e., a "location"), and then assign the play button to a given MIDI note number. Whenever that note number is received, the drum

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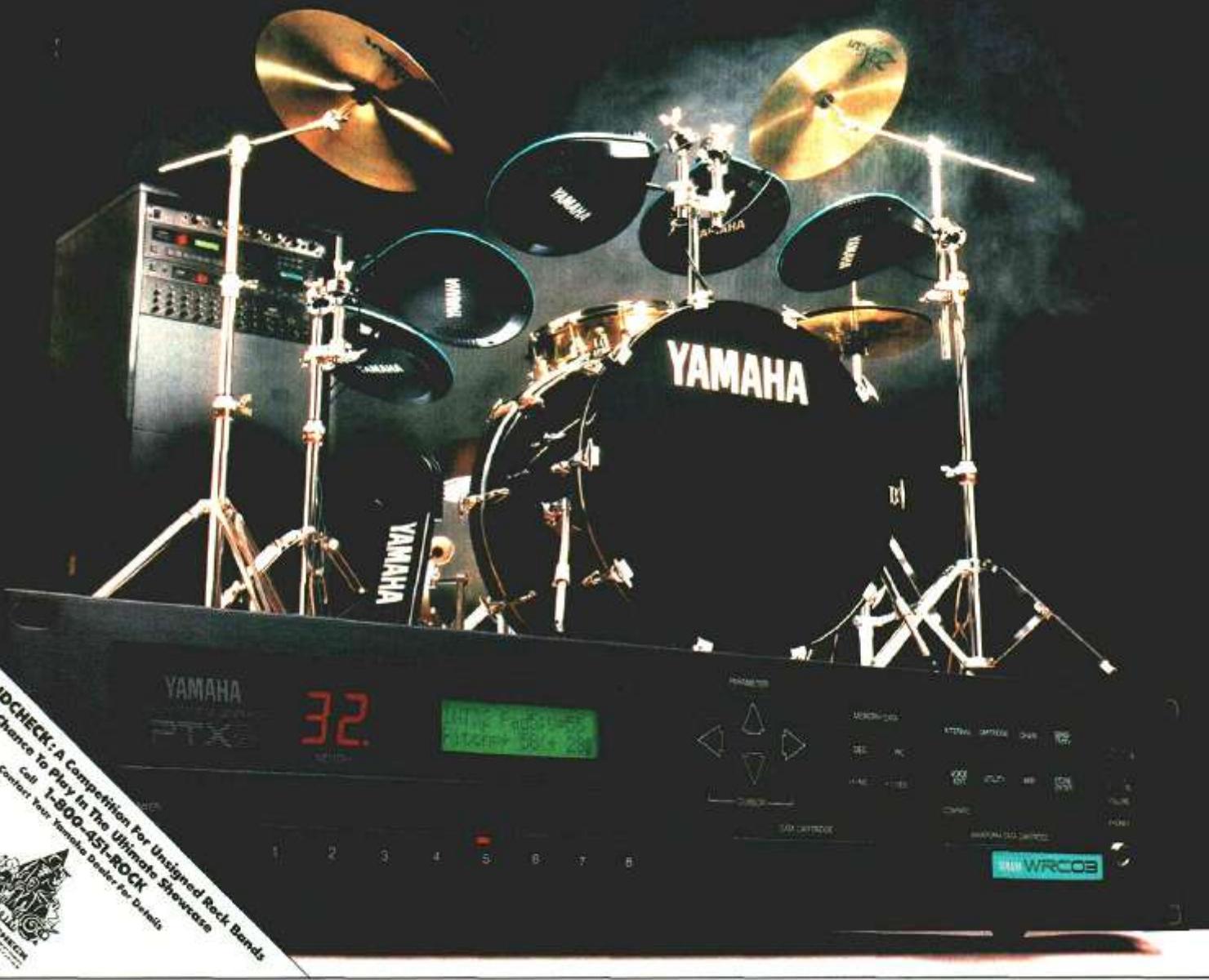
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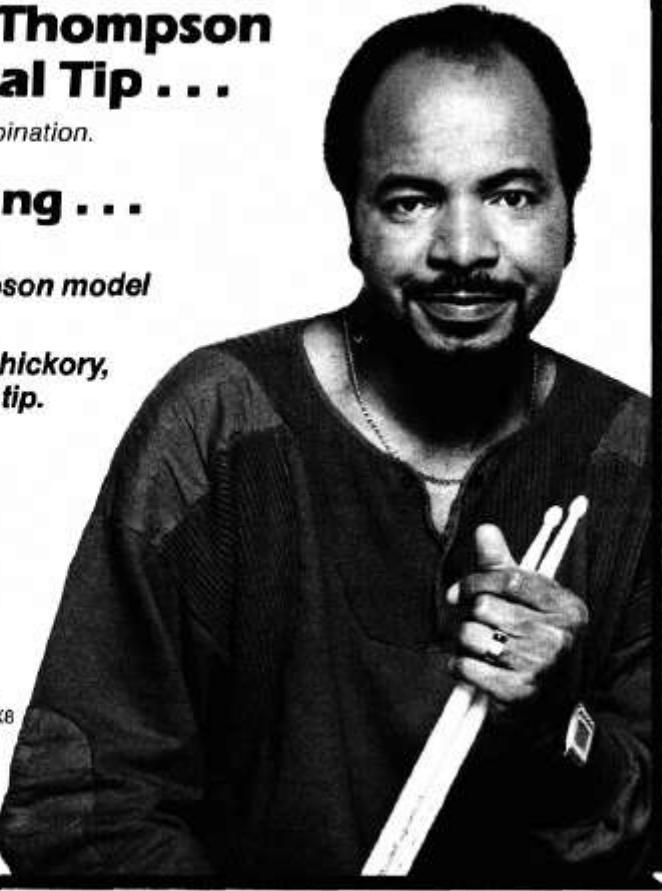
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machine will act as though you hit the play button. Depending on the complexity of the machine, you may have the option of assigning play buttons to specific output jacks. Simple machines may only give you a single stereo output pair, while large machines may give you eight or more freely assignable outputs. For plug-and-go simplicity, stereo outputs are quite nice, particularly if you have control over placement (panning). If you ever do a lot of outboard processing on a number of sounds, separate outputs will be required for each processed sound.

Now comes the perpetual favorite: "overring." Remember, a single voice can produce only one sound at a time. What if you hit a crash cymbal twice in a row? The voice sees this as two sound events and cuts off the first sound in order to reproduce the second. The end result is that you cannot "roll" sounds; they simply will not blend. To blend sounds, you need the equivalent of two voices. In this way, the first sound will be allowed to die out as the second one starts. *Do not confuse this with layering; they are not the same.* In some machines it is possible to assign multiple sounds to a given play button. Triggering the play button produces that combination of sounds. If you layer the same sound twice, you *don't* get the blending effect, you just get a slightly louder sound. This blending capability is sometimes referred to as dynamic voice allocation. Unfortunately, it is not readily available on drum machines at present. Oddly enough, there are times when you need to purposely cut off sounds in order to prevent them from sounding simultaneously. The obvious example is with hi-hats. Unless you own two of them, there's no way in which you can play an open and a closed hi-hat at the same time! Many machines have this sort of exclusivity built in. If not, they can usually be coerced into doing so with the proper voice assignments.

Another useful feature is mixing. This allows you to control the volume of each individual sound. In more sophisticated units, you get control over which sounds are assigned to what outputs, decay, and the like. In essence, this is the equivalent of a synth patch. Usually, this sort of thing can be accessed via program change commands (although it may take some fooling around with that song/pattern business). By initiating a program change from your MIDI pad controller, you'll be able to call up a new setup. Finally, make sure that your unit is capable of operating in at least modes one and three (OMNI ON/OFF). This will make multi-unit setups much easier to set up and alter.

So there it is. You don't have to deal with those little plastic buttons, and you don't have to program in sequences either. Drum machines make very nice voice units and may just be the perfect complement to an otherwise totally synthesized electronic drumkit. I hope this helps you in your shopping search!

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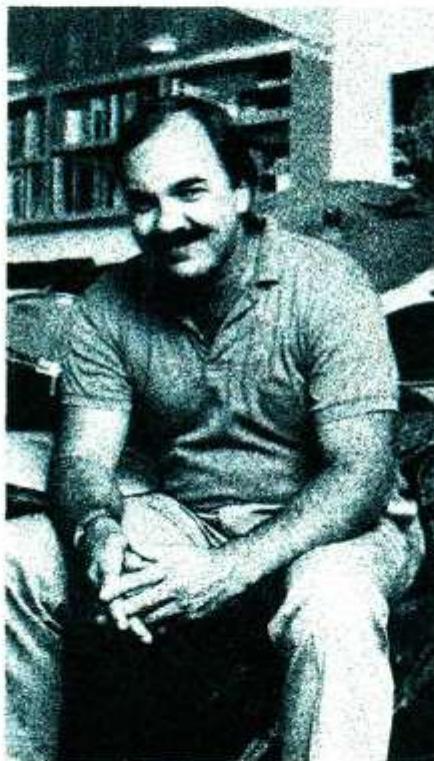


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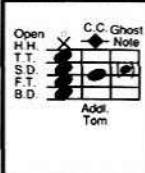
A dedicated team-player, over the years Mark has shared in Alabama's numerous Grammy's and other country music awards while individually placing among the top players in Modern Drummer's annual Reader's Poll; proving that success and popularity are based on equal amounts of commitment and durability.



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Heavy Metal Pow

MUSIC KEY



This month we continue to look at some of the fills played by today's brightest heavy metal drum stars.

Mick Brown

Mick Brown supplies the powerful yet tastefully designed drum parts for Dokken. His drumming is beat-oriented, and his fills are right to the point, like these two from "It's Not Love":

Mick fires Dokken into the first verse of "In My Dreams" with this short burst:

Aynsley Dunbar

Aynsley Dunbar has played with Frank Zappa, Journey, and Starship. His most recent recorded effort is on the multi-platinum *Whitesnake* album. These credentials speak for themselves. In the *Whitesnake* hit "Here I Go Again," Aynsley pulls the band out of a soft intro with this fill, his cymbal crashes telling us that the rest of the song won't be so soft:

Crash cymbals to the rescue again, this time in the intro of "Bad Boys" with this two-measure fill:

Here are two more fills from "Bad Boys." In the first, Aynsley makes use of the open hi-hat for a different crash effect:

This fill contains barely audible ghost notes, in which Aynsley turns a straight-ahead rhythm into a very syncopated one:

Dave Holland

If you're into metal, it's hard not to like Judas Priest. Dave Holland is Priest's drummer, and there's plenty to be learned about

this type of drumming from this man. "You've Got Another Thing Comin'" is known for its solid beat, but this sneaky fill after the first chorus is manufactured by taking the snare, bass, and hi-hat used in the beat and simply altering the rhythm: Variations of this fill are heard throughout the song.

Dave plays this more obvious fill before the guitar solo:

He then puts the toms to use in this fill at the end of the song:

Here's a one-measure fill that Dave plays in the version of "Out In The Cold" heard on the *Priest...Live!* album:

Lars Ulrich

When you think of a fast car, a Ferrari comes to mind. Many people consider Metallica's Lars Ulrich the Ferrari of speed-metal drumming. But Lars is more than just a fast drummer; he's a drummer whose beats and fills fit the songs in which they are played, and that is what makes Lars Ulrich a good drummer.

This fill from "Fade To Black" keeps the song moving forward; it kicks in the song's last chorus:

Lars plays this fill in the song's final section:

In "The Wait," from *Garage Days Re-Revisited*, this fill is heard in the first verse:

Lars stretches out the idea when he plays this beauty in the song's guitar solo:

er Fills: Part 2

by Jim Pfeifer



You'll be in power fill heaven when you've mastered these three from "Crash Course In Brain Surgery":



When playing fast, 8th-note based fills are often all you need. Lars plays these two fills in "Disposable Heroes":



These final power fills from "Master Of Puppets" may look easy, but looks can be deceiving. When playing a song that is as fast as this one, even the simplest fills become a challenge!



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BARBARA MERJAN



which was quite a full-time job—going from playing a club date every few days. I took a few lessons with Jack Moscrop at Drummers World, who's from England, and he told me a lot of things I didn't know about the cymbals and the style. The cymbals used then weren't as good quality as they are today, because the metal was cheap and soft. Larry Hirschfield, who is a percussionist friend of mine and who collects old drumsets, had no use for the cymbals, so he sold them to me. They're perfect for the show. I am now using a little 8" Zildjian splash, though, and a Zildjian effects cymbal that I got in Los Angeles, because the old ones started to crack from hitting them so much. Plus, Joel

Photo by Laura Friedman

I wondered what Barbara Merjan *really* looked like as I walked backstage at New York's Minskoff Theatre after being mesmerized by the Broadway production of *Cabaret*. In the show, Barbara had played drums on stage as a member of the Kit Kat Klub, a cabaret quartet in 1929. I wasn't sure if it was her as a petite blonde approached me, for she had taken off the curly wig and no longer sported kewpie-doll lipstick.

But by her eagerness to show me her drums on stage and the pit orchestra where she is able to sub for John Gates, I knew this was far more than an actress playing a part. From her resume I had actually been aware of that fact, though, with such jazz festivals listed as the Kansas City Women's and the Kool/Newport, work with Kit McClure's Big Band and the Mel Lewis Jazz Orchestra (on a night when Mel's plane was late getting back to town), and a variety of other work as a drummer/percussionist.

Barbara showed me the small band cart on which she sits with the other three musicians in the show, and she pointed out how she has to sit sideways to play the bass drum: "Luckily it's just 1 and 3 on the bass drum, so there's not much complicated footwork," she laughed. Pointing out how she knew to bring the setup cowbell and woodblocks to the audition, she said, "Kit [McClure] had brought us down as a whole group, so she asked if we could audition that way. They had drumsets set up at the Actor's Equity building, and we played the song 'Cabaret.' Then they had us sight-read some of the music we would

have to play. They wanted us to sing, too, so we all did that. It was very exciting. I felt very good about all my background, because I had played scads of shows in high school and college and also had been on stage in a couple of them. The audition was fun, which surprised me since I would usually be nervous. I got called back with a few other people, and we went through the process again. On the third callback, the dance captain was there, and he choreographed something that we all had to move to, because they had to look at that, too. They were looking for an image; it wasn't just how well we played and sang."

Before the third callback, Barbara rented the movie *Cabaret* as preparation, in addition to emphasizing the qualities that she thought should stand out on her resume. Once she landed the role, the preparation intensified. No one directed her to do any of it, however she knows full well that, had she not taken the initiative, its absence would have been noticed.

"I've been to Mel Lewis's apartment a lot, and he's played me things. Plus, I listened to the cast recording, of course, and different records. Vince Giordano is a connoisseur of the music of the '20s and '30s and has a room this size full of records," she said, pointing to the loft in which she practices and stores her equipment. "He even has a whole category of jazz from Germany in that period. So hearing all that, I knew how it should be."

"We rehearsed for three weeks before we started performances on the road," Barbara continued. "We were supposed to be there eight hours a day, six days a week,

[Grey] hits it with his cane, so I had to make a little compromise there. But by looking at old pictures and with Jack's help, I knew how to make it authentic. I knew the bass drums were real big, and I was excited that I got to use these big old drums, even though the band cart is so tiny. I have a Ludwig snare and a 20" Ludwig bass drum on there now, but if I could cut it in half, it would be more comfortable," Barbara laughed before continuing. "The bass drum beater has a little attachment called the Milhaud Attachment, so every time I hit the bass drum, it hits the little cymbal. I have woodblocks, a triangle, and an Acme siren whistle."

There are parts during the show when Barbara actually plays, and there are also times when she is miming John Gates, the pit drummer. "When I'm miming, I'm hitting the drums a little bit. I can't really be playing much, because the mic's for the people talking or singing will pick up the drums too much. I do that half and half in the opening and closing numbers. While I'm on stage in the Kit Kat Klub and everyone is singing and dancing, I'm miming. I may hit a cymbal every now and then because I think it looks good moving, but it's strictly for visual effect. When it's background music, we're playing, and we play the entr'acte, which usually the orchestra plays between acts. That's to tell people the play is about to start up again and to get back to their seats. That's our big number."

While Barbara enjoys the stability of a steady gig (eight shows in six days), she also relishes the freedom that the job al-

by Robyn Flans

lows her to play other musical situations. Since her contract is with the Musician's Union and not Actor's Equity, she is afforded the standard New York City pit orchestra contract, which provides the luxury of being able to take off 50% of the time in a 13-week period.

Barbara also enjoys subbing for John Gates in the pit when that opportunity presents itself. "Being in the pit orchestra is real important to me," she said, "because more musicians see me there, and it's important for me that they know I can play the parts, read, and follow the conductor. Following the conductor is very important, along with having a good time, listening, reading, and consistency. Consistency is really important to the performers on stage. Time is also really important, because you're dealing with dancers. There's a whole chorus of dancers, and they can't dance any faster than is called for; it just doesn't look good. And they can't do it any slower; they can't hold back to get to the next movement. The conductor and the drummer really have to work together. John has a headphone setup because he's behind plastic, otherwise the saxophone players would get their ears blown out from the cymbals. Also, there are numbers on a click track. There's also singing that is pre-recorded, so in the middle of the song, the click track comes on, and you hear the click and '5, 6, 7, 8.' So you have to be locked in, or else that can be very embarrassing. That's in the



'Don't Tell Mama' number and in the kick line after the entr'acte. That's fun to do; it's one more challenge. Plus, it's important to know all the percussion instruments for the pit orchestra. John combined the two books into one, so he has the xylophone, bells, and timpani, which is fun for me because I love doing that, even though I knew one thing I didn't want to do was try out for the New York Philharmonic or go that route."

Why didn't she? "There's too much sitting around for 125 measures waiting to play the triangle," she replied frankly. "There's definitely great stuff to play, but I knew that was something I didn't want to do on a professional level. I'm lucky enough that I ended up in the West End Symphony, where we play some things I wouldn't normally get to play; but I didn't have to do that to the exclusion of everything else."

Barbara chose the drums in her fourth-grade elementary school program. Think about how many kids take an instrument in elementary school, play at it for a year, and that's as far as it goes. Whatever inspires someone to go further can make all the difference in that person's life. "Maybe what prompted me to continue," she said, "was that I got teased about my drum pad. The first day on the school bus, they laughed at me, 'A

girl playing drums—guffaw, guffaw.' So I guess I dug my little heels in and said, 'I'll show them.' It was more than that; obviously I loved the drums. I loved making the sounds and the physicality of it, and I loved music. But that was an underlying motive. There weren't any other girls I knew of doing it until I got to junior high, though.

"Percentage-wise, there are fewer women playing drums than men. There was always the comment from people, 'Isn't that strange?' When I first said I wanted to play drums, my parents, without asking me, went to the music teacher to ask her if it was okay for a girl to play the instrument. The teacher told them that a lot of times girls actually do better than boys because they're really serious about it, while the boys just want to bang around, have fun, and quit."

Some question whether the physical requirements of playing the instrument make it difficult for women, but Barbara countered, "It's just as much a problem for men. I hear them complaining about their backs and the weight of the drums. *Modern Drummer* has carried a lot of helpful articles on exercises for your back, so everybody deals with that. There are men who are smaller than I am, and they're just monsters. Look at little Dave Tough."

Unfortunately, the problems Barbara encountered didn't end in elementary school. By sixth grade, she had committed herself to being a musician, even though she had little knowledge of what that entailed. She did know, however, that it was necessary for her to be as schooled as she could be, and to practice as much as possible. "I loved jazz and I loved pop, too," she recalled. "I played a lot to the hit singles of the time, by groups like the Jackson Five and such. When I got interested in jazz, though, my first big influence was Buddy Rich. I loved to play with those records



and go watch him. Elvin Jones was the next big influence I can remember, and that was a pretty major shift for me as far as styles of music.

"At the end of high school I found a radio station that was playing jazz continuously, and they'd always say who were on the albums. I just loved the Miles Davis and John Coltrane stuff. My parents are jazz fans, too, so they always tried to get me interested in it. I was pretty opposed to it at first, bringing home Grand Funk Railroad, although I never really did play with that music. I liked to listen to it, but never played with it. I liked to play with Elton John and Carole King. My mom would take me to jazz performances, which was great, and it opened up more when I got to college and started playing more percussion, not just drumset. I went to Ithaca College as a percussion major, so it was a requirement to take all those courses. They didn't have drumset lessons, but they did have a jazz lab. I had been playing in a swing band since ninth grade, though, which was a bunch of businessmen who would get together once a week to rehearse and play some gigs. I had a great time and got some great experience playing those stock arrangements.

"So I had some experience when I got into the jazz lab at school and got to play some more contemporary stuff. The instructor there opened me up to drummers like Tony Williams, Peter Erskine, and Joe La-

Barbara, and the teacher was a good drummer himself, so he showed me how to do some things. There you had to learn marimba and timpani and all the theory, and I really loved that. I got kind of away from drumset, although I was actually gigging, but I was putting practice time into timpani, marimba, and percussion ensemble stuff, which I think really helped me musically. When you learn about melody and harmony, it can't help but open up your concept of music and help you hear things that are going on."

It was in college, however, where she realized that not everyone was as open to women players as she had thought. "The leader of the jazz band was one of the teachers at school. He had hired me to play a bunch of gigs with him—quintet stuff, outside of school even—and I had been up to his house to listen to records. I kind of looked up to him, because he was the only jazz connection at the college. I think it was the summer going into my sophomore year, and I had been invited to play at the Kansas City Women's Jazz Festival with Ariel, because we had won the Combo Competition. Then we got called to play the Newport Jazz Festival in New York, which I was very excited about. So I was in this teacher's office, and I told him about it." She paused, and then explained that he made an unbelievably derogatory comment towards women. "It really knocked the wind out of me. I didn't say anything then, but about a year later, I realized just how outrageous this was. After that, our relationship deteriorated. He didn't put me back in the jazz lab; he put a freshman in there who I didn't think was as good as I was. He graded my recital with some pretty unfounded comments, so I wrote to the committee about that and this incident, and repeated exactly what he had said. I sent a copy to the head of the music department, and he contacted my percussion teacher, who then called me into his office and asked me to retract this letter, because it would look bad on my record. I said, 'No way.' I never got an apology or anything. None of this would have ever happened if I had been a guy."

As much as she wishes it weren't so, Barbara realizes that discrimination does exist, even in the Broadway world. She recounted a story she was told recently about someone giving the contractor on a new Broadway show a list of possible subs that included a few women's names. His reply was that there were no females in town who could handle the job. Barbara knows otherwise. She emphasized that there are many people who couldn't care less that she's a woman, but only consider that she is a capable musician.

Barbara makes her living playing the full spectrum of music, from pop with Helen Hooke, to jazz with Marian McPartland, to big band with Kit McClure. "I love big band," Barbara exclaimed. "There are just so many colors. And they're constantly shifting, because you have the trumpets, the

trombones, and the saxophones all playing. There are so many writers now who are great with all the influences that are starting to come in, like Latin and reggae. I heard Bob Mintzer's band recently, and it was wonderful."

"With a big band, I have to be thinking about the bigger ensemble I'm playing for, so my playing has to be bigger. In a way, it's like having a little more responsibility. I can't be playing just what I'm hearing; I have to be thinking about what's coming up, and listening to a lot more musicians. In a quartet I can be more responsible to myself and a few other people. It doesn't have to be spread quite as far. I guess when I'm playing in a big band, I generally think of the drums being bigger and the stuff being broader."

Another musical situation Barbara appreciates is her role in a group called the West End Symphony. "There's an organization called Music Outreach, which provides music for special-ed elementary-school children in New York City. I was fortunate to get with them when I moved here at the end of 1981. There are five trios in their group, and I'm the leader of one of them. We go a couple of mornings a week to different schools to play two concerts for from 10 to 40 kids. The kids may be emotionally disturbed or physically disabled and in wheelchairs. We play songs that are familiar to them and bring a big bag of percussion instruments so that some of them can get to play with us. We talk about our instruments, we sing, and we show them dances from around the world. It's been real rewarding to me to be able to do that."

For Barbara, just playing is rewarding. When asked where her musical heart lies, she laughed, "I keep asking myself that. I seem to have to let myself go through the stages of what I go through. Before I did Cabaret, I did more pop than I had in previous years. I was in a band playing pop music and playing percussion for Helen Hooke's band, as well as playing in Kit McClure's band, which plays contemporary stuff too, not just the old big band arrangements. Mel Lewis has given us some arrangements to play. When I was on the road, I would sit in with somebody after the show and play in some jam sessions where it was just jazz quartet style, and it felt so good to do that. I would enjoy doing more Broadway and playing in the pit orchestras of shows, too. The other thing that I think is important now for Broadway is the use of electronic instruments, and I'm getting more into that. I have the Yamaha RX5 and the Roland Octapad, and John Gates has the Roland drumset, which I've fooled around with some. I'm starting to collaborate with a writer, creating drum parts for the songs, and I've done some recording, which is fun, too. That's a whole other aspect to deal with. I'm not forcing myself to channel energy into just one thing, because I like all these things, and I think it's possible to play them all, keep working, and be happy."

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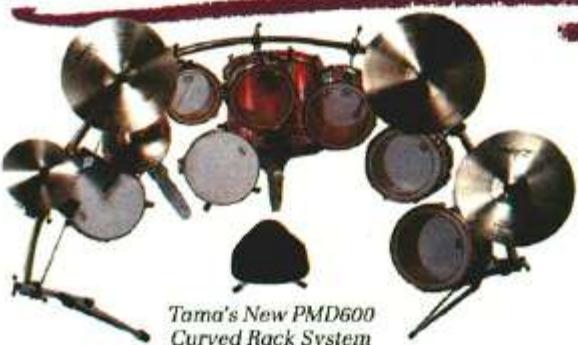
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Farriss continued from page 23.

Andrew, and I were so intently on one track—music—that we were too stubborn to let anything else perforate that. It was to the point where we had the will to make it happen, and when other people see that, they allow it to happen as well. The loud noise from playing all the time, the lack of interest in school, being a bit esoteric—not your normal kid interested in sports—and just the total preoccupation with it was the way it was for all of us, as far back as I can remember. At an early age, we all knew what we wanted, and we knew we would be doing this."

Ironically, Jon relates that, although he and his brothers were ardently devoted musicians, they never played together until they formed an early incarnation of INXS in the mid-'70s. "That was because our playing was really private to each of us," he explains. "I guess it's really strange that INXS came together at all, given that we literally played together for the first time when the band became a band."

By age 13, Jon had developed a legitimate reputation as a drummer, having played with a dozen bands at that early age. Yet he remembers that he still had to walk in the shadow of his eldest brother, Tim, for most of his adolescence. "I was always the youngest kid in the bands I was in. I was always 'Tim's little brother' and wasn't taken seriously, always hanging with the big guys. But I was basically respected at a young age because I could play."

"By age 13, I played in bands of a more serious type, in that we were writing our own music and creating our own sound," he continues. "And we were doing very different styles of music as well: Deep Purple, Led Zeppelin, the Beatles, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, a bit of Motown. When INXS got together, it was the result of our various influences. Our backgrounds as musicians have been versatile, mine especially because I played with a club group for a time. It was a bit regressive on a creative level, but it served primarily as a way to get professional at a young age as well as stylistically versatile. And I was 13, playing with musicians who were 20 to 24. We'd cover Chicago to the Doors. It definitely added variety to my background."

The Farriss Brothers—formed in 1977

when Jon turned 16—was the original tag for INXS, and featured the same lineup as it does 11 years later. The following year, the band relocated to Perth, on the West Coast of Australia, to assemble songs and to play the many clubs that populate the area's mining towns.

With their name now INXS, the group released their self-titled debut album in 1980 in Australia. It was at this point that the band started earning a sizable live reputation Down Under, playing an average of 300 shows a year over the next few years. They followed up *INXS* with *Underneath The Colors*, which rapidly propelled their fame in their homeland.

But the pivotal point in the INXS story concerning their worldwide—and more specifically, American—popularity had to be the international release of *Shaboob Shaboob* in February of '83. Recorded the previous year and released to high acclaim in Australia (reaching number five on the charts there), the third release proved to be the icebreaker for radio-play recognition. Its first single, "The One Thing," became a staple of American radio that particular summer, while its video was in constant rotation on MTV. Audiences were gravitating towards highly danceable rock at that time, and INXS flaunted danceable rock rhythms on *Shaboob Shaboob*. But what elevated INXS apart from a plethora of seemingly similar dance-rock aggregations was their highly definitive yet broad sound.

Experimenting with everything from Motown soul and skeletal synthesized funk, to frenetic and gutsy guitar breaks that just nip at the outer fringes of metal, INXS defy classification. As documented, the varied leanings stem from the varied influences of their six discerning members. There are a compendium of influences merging and fluctuating throughout all of their releases, but the group as a whole is always moving in the same direction at the same time, allowing them a recognizable sound that takes risks, but does so with successful results.

In Jon's case, there is a fascination and long relationship with funk and soul. "Motown was very much a part of my upbringing, as it was my parents' choice of music when we were kids," he says. "It wasn't necessarily in my lunchbox in terms of my

record collection, but it was something that I listened to a great deal, and it was something I was inspired by."

On the heels of *Shaboob* came *The Swing*, which indulged Jon's inclination for funk and aggressively pushing rhythms. The initial single, "Original Sin," kicked off the collection with its keyboard and sax excursions. Although the production was a little bottom-heavy in patches, it still yielded enough propulsive dance rhythms and infectious hooks to garner multi-platinum status. It also contained material on which Jon shared songwriting credit. How did that transpire?

"The general process for writing an INXS song is that we take a tune that one of us has written, listen to it, and try it out. If it doesn't hit all six very opinionated musicians really well, then we don't do it. If it does but it needs to be worked on or changed, we try to smooth it out. With 'Melting In The Sun' [off *The Swing*], after we auditioned our various songs to the rest of the band, we decided to do two particular songs—one that Tim wrote and one that I wrote. During rehearsals for the album, both of those songs were giving us some problems, so we decided to join the two of them together, keeping my main theme and chorus and adding Tim's verse part. Then Michael Hutchence came in with his lyric, and there you go. That's basically how that song was put together."

In the Autumn of '85, INXS presented *Listen Like Thieves*, which marked their status as a Stateside platinum-selling group. This album took the funk backbeat of its predecessor several steps further. Spawning the hits "What You Need," "This Time," "Kiss The Dirt," and the title cut, the release emphasized rhythm above everything else. Additionally, it showcased more of Jon's songwriting capabilities, including a track titled "Red, Red Sun." The track is fast and hard on "Listen," but Farriss explains that its outcome wasn't exactly how he conceived it. "That was written in a much slower tempo than the way it was done. It was written with a funk feel, because it was written around the time we worked with Nile Rodgers. I was very influenced by his guitar style, and in fact, the guitar riff that was written for it was done with his style in mind."

"So 'Red, Red Sun' was picked to have a tempo change," he laughs, "and the intrinsic style of the song changed a bit, but the basic key, notation, etc. remained. Andrew saved the day by changing the chorus and a couple of parts, so we share the songwriting credits."

B-sides are an avenue for INXS to stretch their wings in alternative directions, and Jon has made his own contribution. Case in point: a whacky tune he wrote and performed called "You Never Used To Cry." "We had decided, 'Why do something real serious for B-sides when, after all that work, no one ever really hears it?' Besides, a B-side could potentially be a good song as a single. So we thought, 'How do we achieve

doing better than second-rate singles? We decided to be completely free-form on them, allowing each of us the opportunity to do our own thing. I don't know for the life of me why I chose to do 'You Never Used To Cry,' but when I did it, I didn't have any instruments with me, so I thought, 'I'll just sing all the parts,' he says, laughing. "So I just played it on the drums, then I slowed the tape down, sang on top of it, and out came the first things that popped into my head! I was singing words that were totally out of context with each other. It was the stupidest thing I've ever done, but they pressed it and released it anyway."

"I got a bit more serious and did a B-side called 'I'm Over You,'" he adds, "and then another after that as well. I was always interested in doing things in the studio, and this kind of thing really gave me that chance. That's how I eventually got into producing."

Farriss produced *Glory Road* in 1986 for Australian singer/guitarist Richard Clapton, who in fact had produced *Underneath The Colors*. Farriss explains: "He had been putting out records that were progressively selling less and less. He was a friend, and I was also interested in working with him because he's a very good songwriter. Anyway, he had been sending me tapes, and I had been giving him my thoughts about them. Eventually, it had come down to the time for him to record, and I had just gotten off our tour in support of *Listen*. There had been another producer hired to do it, and he wanted me to drum on it. We hadn't discussed the production; he was just very gracious about wanting me to play on it, so I said, 'Of course I'll come in and do a few tracks.' Barry [bass player for INXS] was in there as well, and during the work on the first track there was more of a musical understanding between me and Richard than between him and the producer. Soon after, the producer thought he might as well leave. He had plenty of other projects to do, and it was obvious that it wasn't working out that well with him. The guy who was paying for it told me, 'You might as well do it yourself because you're already producing it anyway.' So I did.

"Not that the other producer couldn't have done it, but he didn't have the musical capacity to understand the arrangements I had put together. I wanted to put together a new sound for Richard, and a lot of that was based upon my drumming, and no one knows my drumming better than I do. Ultimately, it worked out well, although I was a little nervous at the time. We had quite a few months in the studio, and there was quite a bit of money spent on the project, so it turned out to be a fantastic learning experience. I learned a lot about engineering, balancing the mix, understanding the board, understanding the band, and compiling the sounds for the music. It definitely was an endless stream of information and education for me, all the way through."

From his self-taught drumming and percussion to his continual experiments with

electronics to his songwriting and producing, Jon Farriss emerges as a man who is always looking to increase his knowledge. "I scare myself with what I know, and I scare myself with what I don't know," he comments. "It's yin-yang. The more I learn, the more I learn that there's a lot more to learn. And you're always relearning what you already know. You can see things more objectively with time.

"At the point we're at now, we've been around the globe a few times, and I've changed. I listen to what I did ten years ago and say to myself, 'What was I thinking about when I did that?' because I don't think that way anymore musically. And in ten years' time, I might feel the same way about what I'm doing now."

Future aspirations for 1989, when the band will probably partake in a much-needed break? "I'd like to do some sessions with other players, perhaps. Or, just get back to my domestic life and try to express myself creatively there for a while, which I haven't done for years because I've been so busy.

"The things I want to do are in my mind—sort of a subliminal thing—but I've been psyching myself up for something else. I don't believe in pushing things. They happen when they are ready to happen. I mean, I wasn't searching for the production thing; I never busted my ass to do it, it just happened when it was supposed to. So you never really know what's in store next."



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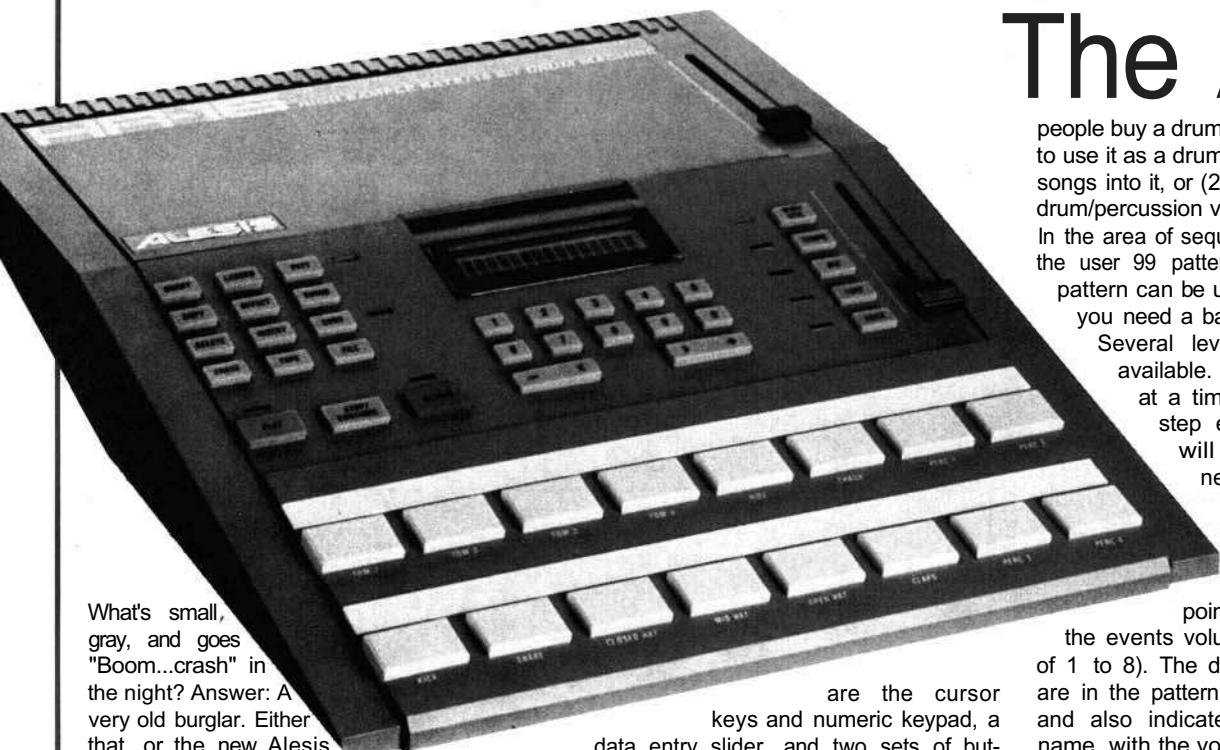
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What's small, gray, and goes "Boom...crash" in the night? Answer: A very old burglar. Either that, or the new Alesis HR-16 drum machine.

The HR-16 is surprisingly small and light compared to its competition (partially due to the fact that it uses a small AC wall adapter as its power supply). At first glance, one may even get the impression that this unit is somewhat of a toy, and should be sold next to the \$79 "mini-key" keyboards that seem to sprout like mushrooms in every store. Simply put, the HR-16's guts far outdistance its surface "appeal." Alesis has packaged a number of features into the HR-16, including a very nice MIDI implementation, and has positioned it at an attractive price point.

The top of the HR-16 is dominated by 16 velocity-sensitive play buttons. Above these

are the cursor keys and numeric keypad, a data entry slider, and two sets of buttons: one set for song/pattern functions, and the other set for voice, tempo, and other special functions. Positioned pretty much dead center and above the keypad is a two-line alpha-numeric display (yellow backlit LCD). This display is your communication window with the HR-16, and gives you all of the data pertinent to your present function. The back panel of the unit contains the power adapter jack and on/off switch, MIDI in/out, tape out, and two sets of stereo output jacks. The very top of the unit is hinged, and by lifting up on the small tab, a brief but thorough guide sheet is revealed. (No, this is not detachable.)

Basically, there are two reasons why most

The Alesis

people buy a drum machine: (1) They want to use it as a drum sequencer and program songs into it, or (2) they want to use it for a drum/percussion voice module or expander. In the area of sequencing, the HR-16 offers the user 99 patterns and 99 songs. Each

pattern can be up to 682 beats long, so if you need a bar of 53/8, you can get it.

Several levels of "swing" are also available. Patterns are recorded one at a time in either real time or step edit mode. Quantization will go as fine as 1/64; the next finer step is considered "no quantization."

In step edit, you can add and delete drum events at each quantization point. You can also change

the events volume level (at increments of 1 to 8). The display shows where you are in the pattern in beats and sub-beats, and also indicates drum events by pad name, with the volume level next to it. It is possible to leave step edit and reenter under a new quantization level. This new level is only applied to new drum events (very handy). The one bad thing about step edit is that editing is forward only; you have no way of backing up in the sequence short of quitting edit and reentering. (What ever happened to bi-directional linked lists?) Along with drum events, patterns also have voice, mix, and tuning assignments associated with them. (More on this later.)

Once you have created the requisite patterns, they may be strung together to form a song. The song creation functions of the HR-16 are not particularly sophisticated, but do get the job done. You may freely insert and delete patterns and tempo

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HR-16 Drum Machine

changes anywhere in the song. You can also copy songs. Interestingly, you can copy a song to itself, which makes the song twice as long. By the way, the copy function also works on entire patterns, and even on specific drum rhythms within the pattern! Unfortunately, there is no provision for segment looping, as in "play these next four patterns six times in sequence, because it's the fade-out chorus." While I'm not an advocate of highly repetitive music, I'm sure that many pop arrangers would like this feature. Your alternative here would be to do this whole thing manually, or to combine the four little patterns into one big pattern (using copy) and then insert that six times. The combination of odd-sized patterns and instant tempo changes will allow you to do some neat stuff—if you don't mind spending a few minutes of calculation time. If you've ever tried programming any of Frank Zappa's *Shut Up 'N' Play Yer Guitar* drum parts, you know what I'm talking about. Yes, you *can* get a measure of 5/4 with the toms doing a 7 into 3 fill; just remember that the tempo can't go over 255 bpm.

Okay, enough on the sequencer stuff; what about the unit's use as a voice module/expander? Here the *HR-16* shines very brightly, indeed. It has a few limitations, but it is one of the best boxes for expansion yet. First off, the unit comes with 49 16-bit, high-sample rate (20kHz bandwidth) drum/percussion sounds. These samples are nice and bright and have very little noise. The sound selection is rather broad, and there should be something in there for most everybody. (This is, of course, a matter of personal taste.) As an example, for snares your choices include: ambient wood snare, 13"

piccolo snare, gated snare, rimshot, cross stick, brush hit, and more. There are five different toms, including power and double-headed types, as well as a classic electronic tom. You have your choice of normal and "bell" ride cymbal hits, and well over a dozen different percussion sounds, including timbales, congas, claves, wood-blocks, and so forth. There is a single crash cymbal, and although this may be tuned to produce different sizes, it would have been nice to have either a China-type or a splash cymbal in there. (Maybe having two different versions of the cowbell, wood-block, and maracas was a bit much, eh?)

From this selection, 16 sounds are assigned to the 16 play buttons. Multiple assignments are allowed for layering. Also, the same sound may be assigned to many different play buttons. Each button also has specific tuning and mix assignments associated with it. The tuning range is about a fifth up or down. "Mix" allows you to set a relative volume (0-99) and one of seven pan positions for the stereo output of your choice. You cannot assign a pad to both sets of stereo outs (as in the creation of two different mixes). Also note that the pan assignments are ignored if you've only plugged in a single cord (very handy). Twelve of the play buttons each use a single D/A "voice." The three hi-hat buttons share one voice (exclusive outputs), and the crash cymbal button uses two voices in order to achieve a blended sound. The sixteenth voice is used by the click track. There are no rules governing what goes where, so if you assign a ride cymbal to the crash pad, you can "roll" the ride sound. Likewise, if you assign three toms to the three hi-hat buttons, they cannot play together. This

setup isn't bad (it's far superior to the single voice/button arrangement), but when using the *HR-16* as an expander, the drummer should be able to "roll" several different sources.

In the land of MIDI, the *HR-16* gets even better. First, the unit has a few nice programmable extras: It can start songs via MIDI if desired; it can echo MIDI IN info to its own MIDI OUT; it can ignore drum messages from MIDI (and suppress their transmission); and more. The *real* neat thing is that you can recall patterns with program change commands. Since each pattern has voice, mix, and tuning levels associated with it, this boils down to a patch change! This is perhaps the nicest addition to the whole package. Also, each play button is programmable as far as its associated MIDI Note On number. The note number assignment is global and is *not* associated with patterns (not a problem). The unit will respond in OMNI mode, or on channels 1 through 16.

The *HR-16* also has a number of little extras. For example, the play buttons can be set for soft, medium, and loud dynamic response, or at one of eight constant levels. There is also a facility for storing and recalling data via cassette tape. The *HR-16* manual leaves a bit to be desired, though. While it does cover all the bases, it is rather short (less than 30 pages) and dry, and assumes a previous knowledge of drum machine programming—no example sessions are given. Considering its overall capabilities and price, though, the *HR-16* would be a fine addition to any home studio. The unit's suggested retail price is \$449.00.



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woodwork afterwards. Then if they happen to be around for the next tour, they're hired again. I think that Elton wanted to keep the unit together because, as you say, there is a certain rapport between us all. This means that it is particularly quick getting a backing track down, because everyone is able to compensate for everyone else. I love it; it's one of the biggest things to be said for a band unit.

Having said that, there is also a lot to be said for not knowing how another player is going to react all the time. Session players are known for being kept on their toes, and it's that uncertainty that can make things sound slightly more precarious and perhaps more exciting. I enjoy doing sessions as an independent, and I think Elton appreciates this, because it brings other styles and other reactions into the band environment with Elton.

I did an album and a three-week tour of Japan with a Japanese singer called Koji Tamaki. He came to London to make the album, and the band who did that were invited to do the tour as well. I had to clear it with Elton's office, of course, but it was good. It kept me on my toes, and it kept the new ideas flowing. I think it's important for a player to get the stimuli constantly flowing in. If you cease to get any input, it becomes predictable and boring, like doing a "9-to-5."

SG: You've also done an album with Paul McCartney in the meantime.

CM: That was another enormous buzz. He's

definitely one of the all-time greats. There was this face that I'd seen so many times—on album sleeves, on TV; I'd grown up with it. And there it was, on the other side of the glass in the drum booth, smiling at me and playing along with what I was playing. It's one of the few occasions in recent years when I've nearly fallen off the kit because of not quite believing what was happening to me. [laughs] I've regarded Paul McCartney as one of my favorite drummers, actually. He played on a lot of the early Wings stuff, and his intuition about what to put where shows that he is really gifted. He's a natural drummer in the same way that Stevie Wonder is—not a drummer first and foremost, but someone with some wonderful off-the-wall ideas. People who aren't trained on a particular instrument often come up with brilliant ideas, because they aren't tied down by any technique they've been taught.

SG: Does McCartney lay down backing tracks with a full rhythm section, as Elton does?

CM: Yes, in fact there was one track that we laid down as a six-piece with hardly any overdubs. It was an instrumental. We had Duane Eddy on guitar and Jim Horn, who played with the Rolling Stones a lot, on sax. That was a really exciting session. You see, we're talking about people like Elton John and Paul McCartney who've grown up with the idea of putting everything down together—most of the time because they weren't allowed the luxury of multi-track recording when they started out. Multi-track recording is a two-sided thing: It is possibly one of the greatest technological advances in music, yet it is also one of the most potentially damaging things for creativity!

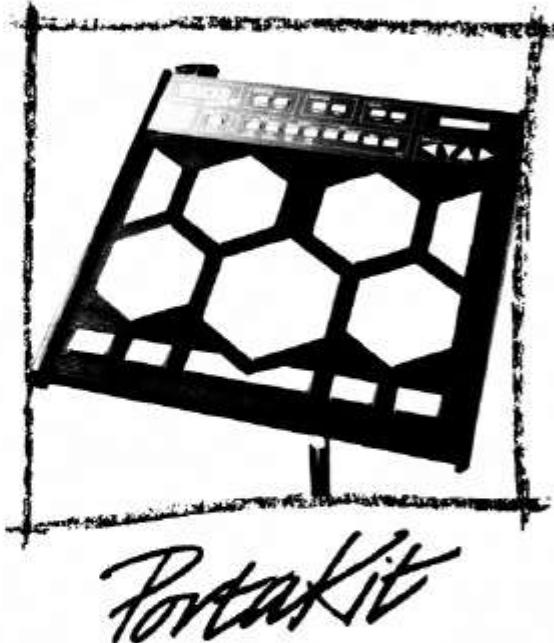
SG: What do you consider to be the damaging aspects?

CM: I have done sessions where I had to play just the bass drum all the way through the track, then just the snare drum all the way through, then the hi-hat, then maybe some tom-toms and cymbals.... This is so that they could get total separation on each drum and have ultimate control over the final product. That's taking it to an extreme. You have the luxury to be able to do that, but I think that people who do that have the wrong idea about recording and capturing a performance—if it is a performance they want.

SG: But, in general, you and technology are quite good friends?

CM: Well, perhaps I'm lucky; I don't have any of this latest thing that people are calling "technophobia." I'm quite prepared to launch into any new application of computerization or electronics. I'm not scared

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of it, and I've been able to maintain my position as a busy session player at a time when many of my colleagues were saying, "It'll go away." But it didn't go away. It became a complete epidemic at one point. I remember about three years ago, before I joined Elton, 80% of my work was electronic: triggered stuff, drum machine programming, tracks played and then quantized. It was electronic to some extent, whether it was played or programmed.

Every new invention that has come along in the music business has always found its niche. I think that electronics is finally finding its place in the whole master plan, and it is starting to swing the other way. It's true that it won't last to the same degree that it has been used in recent years, but there is going to be some element of electronics in evidence forever. This kind of thing goes back even to the time that the electric guitar was invented; it stayed. There were union attempts in the '20s to outlaw the bass drum pedal! I think they were frightened that every single aspect of percussion was going to be taken over by one person playing everything. But if you look back at it now, classical percussion has remained untouched by this aspect. You don't get someone in a symphony orchestra playing a drumkit; you still get a percussion section.

SG: Following this line of thought, there are styles of music—which can loosely be categorized as jazz and rock—that have grown up in the twentieth century with the drumkit at their heart. These are the forms of music that people have latched onto as the *popular* music. Classical music is more for the elite.

CM: Yes, but I think that in the past ten years in particular, there's been a move towards going back to popular classical music for the masses. But, yes, you are right that electronics has got a firm foothold in *popular* music; but then who are we to decide about progress? This is my answer to the anti-synthesizer lobby: I know that synthesizers look as though they are taking away the jobs of classical musicians; but when it comes down to it, anybody who can afford to do so would rather have real string players than a synth. People like Elton—anybody you care to mention—as soon as they are successful enough and have the budget to allow it, they'll have the real thing. They know that there's nothing

that comes across quite the same way as a number of classical players playing together.

Maybe electronics have taken work away from people; but maybe in some cases the work wasn't there in the first place, and electronics is being used as a scapegoat. It's like drummers complaining about drum machines. You can sit there and moan and call union meetings, or you can get yourself a drum machine, learn how to use it, and then persuade the nearest producer that he is better off having a drummer doing his drum programs, because a drummer knows what to do.

That's what I've done. It does take a lot of learning and relearning, but I believe that being in the music business is a constant learning process. I also believe that people who think that there's nothing else they can learn are working themselves into a rut. If you stop learning, you will immediately be pushed into a backwater. Changes are happening faster than they were, but they're not happening as fast as some people try to make out.

SG: Didn't it ever worry you that the physical drumming skills, which you had taken so long to develop, weren't needed when you were programming things?

CM: Yes, at one point this was true, when the only way you could program a drum machine was to push buttons. Now technology has advanced so that with the aid of electronic drum pads I can play something into the computer. Then I can choose to auto-correct it but leave the feel the way I want it, or auto-correct the main pattern but leave any fills human. I can control how much or how little it sounds like a machine.

SG: You use a Roland MC-500 sequencer and an Akai 5900 sampler. What sort of applications do these have?

CM: For the uninitiated, a sequencer is like a tape recorder, but you don't record the sounds, you record the performance, then you trigger the sampled sounds later. The great thing is that I can get the playing down with any basic drum sound. Then, if

JON FARRISS (INXS)

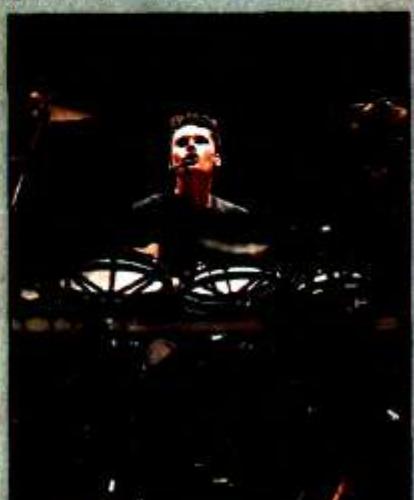
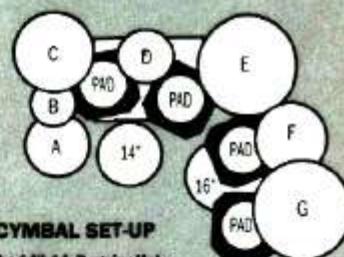


Photo: Ross Halfin

With a string of hit singles and two chart topping albums 'Listen Like Thieves' and 'Kick' cracking the platinum plus mark, INXS has proven yet again that rock bands emanating from Australia possess an unquestionable uniqueness capable of grabbing the attention of music fans the world over.

With over ten years of experience in INXS, a band swayed by rhythm and dominated by distinctive wide-open grooves, John Farriss is well aware of what is required from his drumming and incorporates both acoustic and electronic sounds to deliver the powerful yet understated style that keeps the music of INXS simmering. His cymbals? Sabian. Like the music he plays, their sound is clean and punchy. "They cut through in every situation yet maintain their warmth. They're great ... the best you can get."



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a producer says, "Yes, but we need a deeper snare drum sound," I can find him a sample of a deeper snare drum. If he says, "Yes, but I'd like it to have more ambience," I find a sample of a deeper snare drum with more ambience. Meanwhile, this sound is being played from the sequencer. It's doing exactly what I played, but I can change the sounds without forefeiting the original performance. Then when I've got the sounds that people want, I can say, "Okay, now this isn't quantized, this is me playing real time." If they have a lot of sequencers playing synthesized parts, I can say, "You need a degree of accuracy beyond what I can do as a human being. If you want that machine-like quality, I'll quantize my part." I can then quantize the timing without los-

ing the dynamics. The feel can change, but quite often the feel has to do with dynamics—the sheer volume at which someone plays something. So it will be perfectly in time, but there will be exactly the same attack as there was before.

I am enthusiastic about these electronic gadgets, but I still think that there is noway that a drumpad, a sample, or an electronically generated sound of any kind can recreate all the nuances of a snare drum, a tom-tom, or a cymbal. There is an infinite number of places and ways to hit any one of those instruments, and you'll get a completely different sound from it. The expertise that goes into that is totally intuitive; it's something that we drummers don't even think about. If you want to start a press roll

quietly and get it to build, you start at the edge of the drum and go towards the center, and if you want to rise to a massive crescendo and finish on a "popping" sound, you'll hit the rim on the very end. So you go from the edge to the middle, and finish with the middle and the rim together. That is impossible to program into a drum machine or play on an electronic drumkit. You would need an *infinite* number of variable samples. So if someone wants a real sound, I'll play a real kit. If they want an *electronic* sound, I'll use electronics. The electronic drum shouldn't be attempting to recreate an acoustic drum, it should be making its own sound. If an engineer is going to try to make it sound as close to an acoustic drum as possible, I might as well play an acoustic drum. *And if I can't play the damn thing in time, I don't deserve to be there.*

SG: How did you break into sessions?
 CM: I played in clubs, and although I didn't get jaded, I got disillusioned with the attitude of some people I played with. But in 1975 I was with a really great band that got a record deal. However, the company who had signed us just sat on us. That was another aspect of being in a band that I didn't like: the fact that you were at the mercy of people like that. That band went on to become the nucleus of Kate Bush's band, who I worked with later on. But I started doing some sessions while I was with that record company. They had some writers and singers signed with them, and they would use a lot of the people they had on their books for the sessions. I developed a taste for doing studio work rather than being in a band at that stage.

The big break really came a couple of years later, with Kate Bush. Through working in Kate's band, I met a lady called Isobel Griffiths, who was a fixer for sessions, and I think she marked my name down as someone who might be used. About a year later, a friend who I had worked in clubs with co-wrote the big hit "Too Much, Too Little, Too Late" for Johnny Mathis and Deneice Williams, and he set out to do some 24-track master demos of some of his other songs. He was working with an arranger, John Altman, who usually worked with a specific group of musicians, but the drummer, Pete Van Hook, was on tour with Van Morrison. My friend recommended me for the session, but John was skeptical at first. *But*, by a happy coincidence, he checked with Isobel Griffiths who gave me a glowing recommendation. The session was a success and I got a lot more work through John and Isobel.

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when I did six jingles in one day, for six different people. There was a period in my life, before joining Elton, when I was doing a 65- to 70-hour week.

SG: How did you get the gig with Elton?

CM: I was doing a certain amount of record work as well as jingles. There was Nik Kershaw in particular. Elton adored the first two Nik Kershaw albums. He was using different rhythm sections for different tracks on his 1985 album, *Ice On Fire*, and he said to the producer, Gus Dudgeon, "I'd like to use Nik Kershaw's drummer on some of these tracks." So at Easter of '85 I did my first week with Elton, then we did Live Aid and went into doing the live work. In July '86 we did the *Leather Jackets* album, then the American and Australian tours, and so we came to this album. It really was a snowball effect from the time he heard my work on record and liked it—which is, I suppose, the best recommendation you can get, particularly when they contacted the producer in question and asked, "Is this manufactured, or is the drummer as good as he sounds?" I think it's important to recognize the people who have helped you along. Most of my work has been through word of mouth, and if I hadn't had people saying, "Try him; he's good," I wouldn't be where I am now.

SG: You had to be able to do a good job in the first place, though. Have influences been important to you?

CM: I'm a great fan of Steve Gadd and Jeff Porcaro. I've never really followed the virtuoso players like Billy Cobham and Lenny White; the only one I really got off on was Simon Phillips because he plays with a lot of feel as well. I always understood what he did, but Cobham would often go beyond what I could actually take in. That's probably a shortcoming on my part, but he is over my head a lot of the time. I also admire the clique of drummers who have played with Steely Dan: It includes Gadd and Porcaro, Rick Marotta, Ed Greene, and Bernard Purdie—drummers with feel.

SG: I thought I detected shades of Bernard Purdie in some of the things you were doing today.

CM: Yes [laughs], I admit it. Another big influence on that track would have to be Richie Hayward of Little Feat, I think maybe because Elton was playing with a certain amount of influence from Bill Payne, Little Feat's keyboard player.

SG: You've been subbing for the West End show *Chess* [the English equivalent of a Broadway show], so your reading must be of a very high standard.

CM: In fact, doing *Chess* was a bit of a baptism of fire, because being out on the road with Elton for the previous 14 months, I'd done, virtually no reading at all. When Graham Ward, the regular drummer, called me to ask if I would do it, I accepted because I enjoy challenges, but it was a very sobering experience. I had to get my reading back into shape before I could even tackle the playing. It's a very hard part. One passage has two bars of 5/8, one bar of 6/8, one bar of 9/8, one bar of 5/8, one bar of 7/8, and then it goes back to two bars of 5/8. Reading that is about well-nigh impossible!

It got me back on my toes as far as reading is concerned, and following a stick as well. Fortunately for me, the musical directors are all people I know. I've done a lot of sessions in the past for the current one, Paul McGuire. He's a very sympathetic person. He came to me the first night and said, "Look Charlie, just remember, don't follow the downbeat. Follow halfway up the next upbeat, because the string players are following that." It was a good piece of advice, because in rock sessions, if you have somebody conducting you, you follow the downbeat. But orchestral players follow maybe a quarter of the next upstroke behind.

It would be nice to get to a point with *Chess* where I don't have to rely on the part so much and can concentrate on the conductor a bit more. Splitting your eyes between the part and the conductor isn't the easiest thing in the world. But it's a different aspect of playing, and one that I hope I rise to. It's the whole point of being a versatile drummer.

SG: Standard question: What drums do you use?

CM: Premier. My live kit is a *Black Shadow* with a 22" bass drum, 12", 14", 16", and 18" tom-toms, which are all mounted on

LARRIE LONDIN (Everly Brothers/Studio)

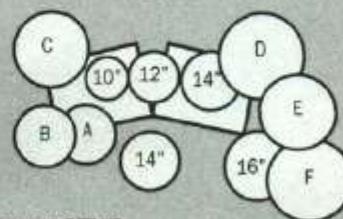


Photo: Ian Meyerowitz

One of the most recorded and successful session players of all time, Larrie Londin's dynamic drumming and creative versatility have made him the choice of a multitude of major artists...resulting in a résumé that reads like a who's who of the best in contemporary music.

Among those who have benefitted from Larrie's tremendous talents are Elvis Presley (Guitar Man), Steve Perry (Oh Sherry), Glenn Frey (The Heat is On), Neil Young (Comes A Time), Ronnie Milsap (Stranger In My House), Journey (Raised On Radio), Chet Atkins (Stay Tuned), as well as B. B. King, Dolly Parton, Waylon Jennings, Jerry Reed, Joe Cocker, Adrian Belew...and the list goes on!

Also a powerful live performer and clinician, Larry says, "In the studio or on stage, Sabian cymbals always deliver, the quality and sound never fail to meet my needs."



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stands, and an 8" deep wood-shell snare drum. The stands are all Premier *Prolock*, but I've got a Tama chain-drive pedal and a Tama throne. That was the kit you saw me using today, but my usual studio kit is a Premier *Soundwave* in natural wood. The bass drum is a 22" with a *Resonator* lining, and the toms are 10", 12", 14", and 16", again all rack-mounted.

I've got a selection of snare drums. The reason I like the 8" wood shell for live work is that I'm able to tune the top head up to get quite a lot of bounce and crack off it, and yet I'm still able to get the depth. I need the variation in sound between the rock numbers and the ballads that Elton does, and I needed that depth that Nigel Olsson used to get. For studio work, I've

got a variety of metal-shell drums for a slightly more clangy sound. One of my favorites is the limited-edition *Piccolo* drum that Premier makes. It has such a cut and top end to it! That sound is very much in vogue again. In the mid '70s they used to have the snare drum and bass drum almost at the same pitch, particularly in disco music. But people have been tuning drums up ever since. People like Phil Gould of Level 42 have done a lot to popularize the high snare drum sound. I think it's very healthy; there should be a different space within the music for each drum.

The snare drums I tend to take around with me for independent sessions are the *Piccolo* and a 6 1/2" wood-shell *Project One*, which has a second shell inside. It is a very

versatile drum; you can tune it high, but you can also get a lot of depth out of it. I do actually have an old favorite snare drum that isn't a Premier. It's a Tama 5" metal-shell drum from before the time they were called Tama; it's a Royal Star.

SG: *Resonator* shells are standard in the *Black Shadow* kit, and you've had the lining added to your *Soundwave* bass drum. What is it that you like about them?

CM: When you get behind the kit and play it, you may notice a fractional increase in the length of the note from the toms, and a slight extra fullness about the bass drum. But if someone else is playing the kit and you walk away from it, it retains that fullness and it projects.

SG: Does this help when you are recording, or playing miked-up on stage?

CM: Not necessarily for recording, but for playing on stage, yes. You do get a lot of ambience, and it makes the people on stage feel better. I don't always do gigs fully miked up; I sometimes do smaller gigs with that kit. It does have a big sound, and therefore it isn't necessarily the right sound for every session I do, and that is why I have the *Soundwave*. It's designed to be a more controllable, "hi-fi" sounding kit. I have a *Resonator* lining in the bass drum, because I love the sound of a double-shelled bass drum. I think that the bass drum is the one that changes most with a *Resonator* shell. Nowadays we damp our bass drums so that there is hardly any ring to them. It's that bottom end the drum can produce on initial impact that you really notice with the *Resonator*.

SG: What about the choice of heads?

CM: I use all Premier heads. On the bass drum I like the *Powerplay* heads. These are the ones with the black "doughnut" patch. I use pipe-band heads for snare drums, and on the tom-toms *Clearplay*, top and bottom, to get the drums breathing. They are single-ply and quite light; the disadvantage is that they "dish" easily and get dented a lot. But having to change the heads regularly is a small price to pay for the superb sound they give.

SG: What are you using the *Drum Bugs* for?

CM: They were originally fitted to trigger electronic sounds, but at the moment in the studio they are being used to trigger noise gates, which we've got on the mic's for each individual tom-tom, so that the mic's only "opens" when that particular drum is being played. This is so that the sound doesn't spill onto the other mic's. When I'm using them live, I still have the noise gates, but each *Drum Bug* goes into a split lead so that it can be used to trigger electronic sounds as well.

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SC: Just to complete the picture, what about the electronic gear you use, apart from the sequencer and sampler we discussed earlier?

CM: I use Roland Octapads as a MIDI interface, with Boss MPD-4 MIDI pads for hi-hat and cymbals. I also have four Roland PD-31 external pads and a Drum Workshop EP-1 bass drum trigger pedal. My drum machines are a Roland TR-505 and a TR-626, with an MDR-30 module.

SG: I noticed that you were using black Paiste Colorsound cymbals in the studio.

CM: Yes, I've got 15" hi-hats, 16" and 18" crashes, a 20" Power Ride, and a 20" China. Originally I just had them for the visual effect on live work, but I've found that they work very well for recording. I think that there's a stigma attached to colored cymbals, but I think it is mistaken. The ride cymbal is particularly good for recording, because it doesn't build up, being slightly damped. I also have a set of 3000s, which I normally use on sessions with the Soundwave kit: 14" hi-hats, 14", 15", and 16" crashes, an 18" Power Ride, and 16" and 18" Chinas.

SG: The 3000s are relatively new. What were you using before, and do you see the 3000s as an improvement?

CM: I was using 2002s for ride and crash, and 602 hi-hats and Chinas, but I'm now very happy with the 3000s; they are very crisp and clear.

SG: You've got the attachment for an extra "double" pedal on your bass drum pedal. Do you use that much?

CM: I've never really gotten into using double bass drums; I prefer to concentrate on speeding up my single drum. The reason for the double attachment was that, while we were in Adelaide on the Australian tour, I locked my knee up. Fortunately, they have some of the best knee surgeons in the world there because of injuries from Australian Rules Football. I had to have an operation, and I only had a day in which to recover before the next gig. So I phoned them and said, "Look, I'll make the gig, but get me a double bass drum pedal. That way, if my right leg gives out, I'll use my left." As it happened, I was able to play most of the time with my right foot, but when the leg got tired, I'd take over with my left for a while.

SG: Did you have any coordination problems?

CM: Yes [laughs], it's a bit like turning your guitar around and trying to play it the other way up! It was a question of making do. I'm not ambidextrous and I'm very much right-handed. All the exercises I've done to make me more independent have, if anything, inhibited me. There are a few things I do with my left hand, but I don't really lead with my left hand and I'm perfectly happy to be a right-handed drummer. This obsession, at the moment, with leading with the left hand—I think it can be detrimental. It can make you feel awkward and stiff. The child who is forced to write with his right hand when he is naturally left-handed is likely to develop complexes, and educators recognize that today. I think the same can apply to drummers. If you are naturally ambidextrous, you'll do it. There are exercises to make you as fast with your left hand as with your right, and there's nothing wrong with that! What I'm saying is that people who become obsessed with trying to play left-handed all the time are probably doing themselves more harm than good. There have been generations of right-handed drummers who are dazzlingly good players.

SG: Finally, may I put you on the spot and ask you to sum up your secret of success?

CM: [laughs] I was asked this question while I was doing a demo for Premier at The British Music Fair, and what I said was, "By making up for my technical shortcomings by turning up on time and being nice." Okay, it was a bit of fun, but there's many a true word spoken in jest. I think that anybody who aspires to be a session player has to have the ability to be totally chameleon-like and have understanding towards the people he or she is working for. You can be the greatest player in the world, but be a grumpy bastard and you won't continue to work. You've got to bite your lip, if necessary, keep the producers at ease, and do what they want you to. In his interview in *Modern Drummer*, Harvey Mason said, "Unless you are prepared to do the job you've been booked to do, you might as well give up." I agree with that.

JEAN-PAUL CECCARELLI (Sting/Studio)

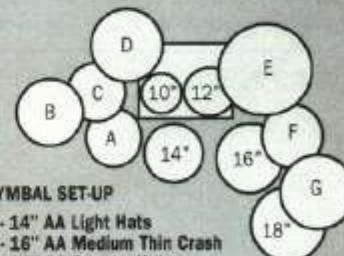


Photo: Adrian Schachmann

With his selection to Sting's all-star band, Jean-Paul Ceccarelli has suddenly found himself thrust into the spotlight of international success on the 'Nothing Like the Sun Tour'... a tour that will see him playing to capacity audiences around the world, including a selection of dates for Amnesty International.

A native of Nice, France, Jean-Paul is renowned in his homeland where he, along with his brother André, a major influence and with whom he has co-authored the best-selling drum book 'The Ceccarelli Experience', ranks as one of that country's leading live and studio sessions drummers.

A versatile player who has been heavily influenced by the Jazz and Fusion greats, Jean-Paul possesses a punchy yet fluid style that has not only kept him in great demand for extensive television and movie soundtracking, but has lent itself perfectly to the wide range of styles that Sting incorporates into his performances.



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The Academy

I have been the percussionist on the Academy Awards show about eight times so far. Some of the composers that I have been involved with at the awards include Bill Conti, Jack Elliott, and Lionel Newman. This last Academy Awards show was the Sixtieth Annual show, and we had tons and tons of music to record, perform, and have ready for winner presentations. Larry Bunker played timpani, vibes, congas, shakers, suspended cymbal, and various other instruments; Harvey Mason played acoustic and electronic drums; and I played vibes, xylophone, marimba, orchestra bells, chimes, snare drum, piatti, *Emulator*, song bells, bongos, and various small Latin and percussion effects.

We had a total of 97 pieces of music, of which about one third were prerecorded. The reason for prerecording is so the dancers can have the music for the large production numbers about a week before the show so that they can practice. (In some cases, they need the music early so that they can videotape some of the sequences.) Recording was done on April 4th and 5th, 1988, and we got together again on Sunday, April 10th for a very long day of rehearsals and balances. The day of the show was Monday, April 11th, and we were all there at 8:00 A.M. The show, which was broadcast live from Hollywood, began at 6:00 P.M., and ran a total of 3 hours and 37 minutes. The first piece was the "Opening '88 Pt. 1," and as you can see, Larry Bunker had a nice solo timpani part. The tempo was about 160 on the metronome. (See "Opening '88 Pt. 1.")

The hardest part about doing the Academy Awards show is playing the music for the "nominations" section of the show. We have to be prepared to play music for each and every nomination at a given moment. For the percussionist, each piece of music for each nomination could involve playing a different instrument. Whenever the presenter said, "...and the winner is..." Bill Conti, who was the conductor for this year's show, would give the downbeat, and we had to be there with the right piece of music on the right instrument. Larry Bunker, who played timpani, really had his work cut out for him. Each piece was in a different key, so in some cases, Larry had to be ready to play the right timpani, or change the pitches immediately!

I've often been asked if the musicians know who the winners are going to be beforehand, and the answer is no! No one is told

who the winners will be. Of course, we always have some idea who it *might* be, but we can never be sure. In some cases, like "Achievement in Art Direction," for instance, there were five different nominees. To be able to cover the possibility of playing any of the parts, I needed one bell mallet to play either bells or xylophone, one vibe mallet to play either vibes or suspended cymbal, one chime hammer, and one drumstick.

Another problem that we ran into was in how the presenters would announce the winners of categories. For instance, the presenter would say, "The nominees for 'Original Score' are: George Fenton and Jonas Gwangwa for *Cry Freedom*, a Universal picture; Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Byrne, and Cong Su for *The Last Emperor*, a Columbia picture; Ennio Morricone for *The Untouchables*, a Paramount picture; John T. Williams for *Empire Of The Sun*, a Warner Bros. picture; and John T. Williams for *The Witches Of Eastwick*, a Warner Bros. picture. And the winner is...Columbia Pictures—Cong Su, David Byrne, and Ryuichi Sakamoto for *The Last Emperor*," and the downbeat comes, and you *have* to be playing. The problem is you never know if the presenter will first announce the picture, the company, or the name of the people, and that's when you panic.

Look over the music to the "Original Score" nominees section; this will give you an idea as to what we were looking at. The percussion chair was easier on this particular category. However, the timpani part was tougher. Larry Bunker tuned his five drums to F, G, Ab, Bb, and Eb, and he was ready to pedal the D necessary for winners Ryuichi Sakamoto, David Byrne, and Cong Su for *The Last Emperor*. He then had a few moments to retune, if necessary, for the playoffs.

Usually the orchestra is made up of about 75 of Hollywood's top studio players. It's a little easier for musicians like the violinist or the trumpeter to deal with some of these problems, like being ready for the winner. But when you are playing percussion or timpani, you are definitely in the "hot seat." The drummer, who as I mentioned was Harvey Mason, also has the hot seat, as he is responsible for all the right tempos along with conductor Bill Conti. Playing the Academy Awards is always a challenge, and fun to do. This is why we, the percussionists, chose to be in the greatest section of any orchestra.

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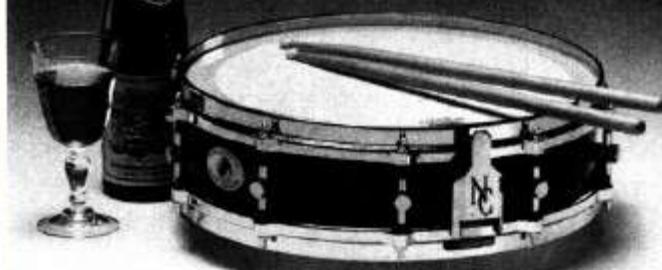
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JONAS GWANGWA

CRY FREEDOM
UNIVERSAL

Timp

PLAYOFF

ENNIO MORRICONE

Timp

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AND CONG SU

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JOHN T. WILLIAMS

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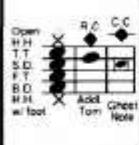
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MUSIC KEY



Through his work with such diverse artists as Weather Report, Gil Evans, Sting, John Scofield, and David Bowie, Omar Hakim has become one of the most innovative and influential drummers on the contemporary scene. His playing is a lesson in creativity and taste. The following transcriptions are examples of the eloquence and wit characteristic of many of his recent recordings.

The first example is taken from the tune "Techno," on the John Scofield album *Still Warm*. The basic pattern is stated in the first two measures and then repeated with variations. Omar avoids playing a straight backbeat throughout the song. He creates tension by not playing the snare drum on beat 2 in the second measure of the pattern. Notice also how a feeling of forward motion is implied by the open hi-hat "barks" and the five-stroke rolls leading into beat 3 of measures three and five. The hi-hat is played with the tip of the stick (not the shoulder) to achieve a light, articulate sound. When practicing this excerpt, pay particular attention to the accented hi-hat notes (especially in measures two and eight) and to maintaining an even, consistent bass drum sound.

Next is a series of hand-to-hand coordination exercises to be practiced in preparation for the following excerpts. Play each exercise slowly and repeatedly until they can be executed in a relaxed, flowing manner. Remember, accented notes should be played loudly, unaccented notes *mezzo* (one, and "ghosted" notes should be barely audible.

After mastering the previous exercises, we move on to two related patterns that Omar has played on record. The first is Omar's solo intro to "High And Mighty," also from the John Scofield album. The next is taken from the middle section of the Weather Report song "Db Waltz," from the *Domino Theory* album. Omar plays this pattern very quietly behind the band's sparse rhythmic figures. The fill in measure five is written as 16th notes to ease readability. To play this pattern accurately, the 16ths should be swung. Don't let all of the notes scare you; these two examples are just variations on the previous exercises. Once again, the hi-hat is played with the tip of the stick.

The next example highlights Omar's unique approach to pop music. The song is "Consider Me Gone," from Sting's album *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*. Throughout most of the tune, Omar plays a very understated jazz shuffle, leaving much room for Sting's vocals. As the song builds to its powerful conclusion, Omar plays a strong backbeat and adds a cymbal bell pattern that makes this beat sound more like a 12/8 African groove rather than the straight-ahead shuffle he started with. The written straight-8th notes should be swung.

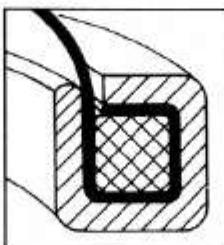
Finally, "Shadows In The Rain," again from *The Dream Of The Blue Turtles*, is a great example of a solid, hard-driving shuffle. Omar keeps this beat surging forward by rarely playing the bass drum on beat 1. Again, play the written straight-8th notes in a swing feel.

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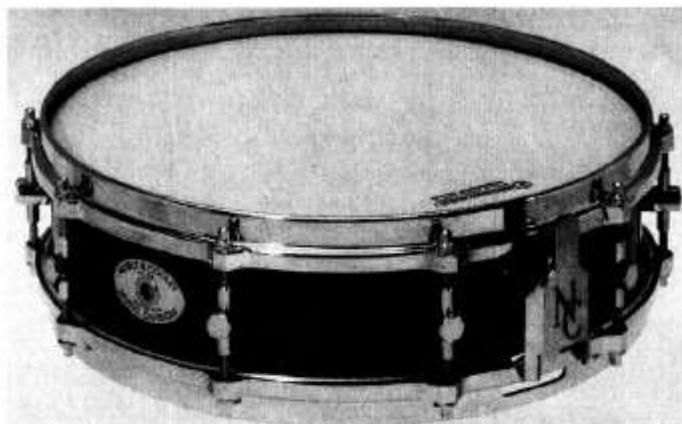
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Piccolo Sn

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Remember when drum sizes got deeper and snare drums got deeper right along with them? Many drummers are using smaller drums now, resulting in a renewed interest in piccolo snare drums. These smaller snare drums are being used to blend in, pitch-wise, with the other drums in the kit, or for a secondary snare drum sound.

I prefer to think of a true piccolo drum as one similar to Ludwig's old 3 x 13 model. (By the way, if anyone has one, I'll buy it!) Oddly enough, Ludwig is not even producing a piccolo snare at this time. However, many manufacturers today are making "piccolo" snares. Most of these, rather than being true piccolos with a 13" diameter, are merely squashed 14" drums. For all intents and purposes though, we can call them piccolo drums, and here's a look at some of the currently available models.

CB-700



CB-700's new MS Series of snare drums includes a 4 1/2 x 13 piccolo snare (the only true piccolo in this review). The drum's shell is 8-ply maple/mahogany, and it has eight double-ended lugs, with plastic gaskets mounted underneath to "float" the lug castings. The snare throw-off uses a center-throw lever, with a fine-tension knob. Twenty-strand wire snares are used on this drum, held with plastic strips.

CB-700 is using 2mm "Power Hoops" on the MS Series, which are a bit thicker than normal and can take higher tensions more readily without warping or cracking. To me, they also provide a louder rimshot sound. The drum has two ventholes, and does not have any internal muffling.

The drum I tested came fitted with a coated Remo Ambassador batter and a "no-name" snare-side head (presumably made for/by CB-700). To be honest, the thing that most hurt the drum's sound (and tuning) was that bottom snare head. I couldn't get it to seat properly or tune up evenly; it was plainly inferior. After changing it to a Remo Diplomat, those problems vanished. I was able to keep the head level, tune it accurately, and make an annoying snare rattle go away. (All the more reason for using quality heads on your drums—beginners, take note!)

The CB-700 piccolo had good volume and response, but I couldn't get it to tune up quite as high as I would have liked. Don't get me wrong; the drum does sound good, and can still be pitched quite a bit higher than a standard-sized drum.

A major appeal of this piccolo snare is the price. Chrome-finished, it retails at only \$119.50. Blond maple or black lacquer finishes are available for \$189.50. CB-700 has always provided decent quality drums at a decent price, and the MS Piccolo is a good example. (As an added bonus, a vinyl carrying bag is also included.)

Noble & Cooley makes a 3 3/4 x 14 piccolo drum, using the same materials and specifications as their standard snare drums. The drum is built of 1/4" rock maple, which is steam-bent to form a one-piece solid shell. It has ten double-ended tubular brass lugs. As with their other drums, the lug posts are mounted at the nodal point to maximize shell vibration. (On the piccolo, it's just about center.) Die-cast chrome hoops are used, and there's no internal muffler. Reinforcing rings are used at the top and bottom of the shell.

Noble & Cooley's strainer is one of my all-time favorites. The throw-off is made of lacquered brass, and releases via a center-throw lever. It has a brass knurled knob fine-tension adjustment, and on this drum, the 20-strand wire snares are held with plastic strips. The strainer is incredibly smooth and silent. It's actually simple in design, but works like a dream.

The drum I played was fitted with a coated Ambassador batter and a Diplomat snare-side. Since there's no internal damper, Noble & Cooley includes one of their Zero Rings for the batter head. (A Zero Ring is a thin Mylar O-ring that lays on the outer perimeter of the head to dampen excessive ring and overtones.)

Like all the Noble & Cooley drums I've played in the past, this 3 3/4" piccolo had a full, vibrant tone with great sensitivity. It tuned up to a high pitch easily, and had more than ample volume; rimshots resounded with a nice crack. The drum is sensitive to feather-touch playing, while at the other extreme, will not choke up under loud playing. Five finishes are available: natural maple and honey maple lacquers, and white, red, and black polyurethanes. The drum retails at \$598.00 and certainly earns a five-star rating in all aspects of design, sound, and payability.

A new addition to the Noble & Cooley line is their 6 x 12 Drumbali. The Drumbali shares many features with Noble & Cooley's other snare drums (rock maple shell, brass strainer, etc.), but also has some differences. The Drumbali has six chromed double-ended lugs, which are a variation on their standard lugs. They're still tubular, but are formed to a large rectangle at the bottom. Each lug is attached to the shell with a single screw; the rest of the casting does not touch the shell. The shell's interior has two reinforcing rings: One is near the bottom, at the nodal point (where the lugs attach); the other is equidistant from the top. There is a single venthole, and the drum has a 12-strand wire snare unit, held with cording.

I must mention that Noble & Cooley's bearing edges are simply beautiful. They are expertly cut so that drumhead-to-shell contact is at a minimum, which allows for sensitive response.

The Drumbali sent to me was fitted with a FiberSkyn 2 thin

are Drums

by Bob Saydowski, Jr.

batter and a *Diplomat* snare-side head, but no *Zero Ring*. The premise behind the design of the *Drumbali* is to give the drummer a snare drum also capable of producing a realistic timbale sound. In its snare drum form, it's crisp and dynamic. Throw off the snares, and the drum instantly turns into a cutting high-pitched timbale with great resonance. I wouldn't really recommend the *Drumbali* as your primary snare drum, but it can definitely function as a secondary snare, giving an articulate piccolo snare sound, plus a good timbale sound for Latin and reggae music. The *Drumbali* also retails at \$598.00.

IMPACT



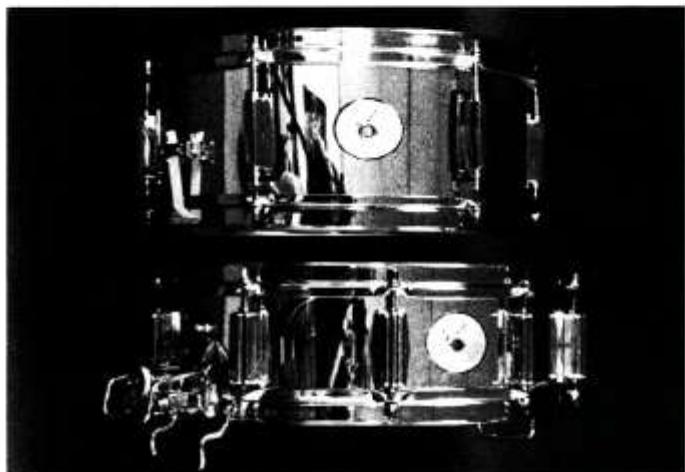
Impact makes a fiberglass-shell drum measuring 4 1/2 x 14, which is the largest of the piccolo snares reviewed here. It also has 12 double-ended lugs, giving it the most tension points of the drums I tested.

A sophisticated parallel-lay strainer is used. The throw-off side works via a large cross-lever, and also has a fine-tension knob near its bottom. (The butt end also has a tension knob.) Twenty-strand wire snares attach directly to both ends of the strainer, and extend past the snare head on both sides. To allow for this, the bottom hoop is entirely cut away, leaving an open gate. Steel guard rails are attached to the tuning rods adjacent to the throw-off and butt assemblies. A steel rod passes through the inside of the drum to connect up with both ends of the strainer unit. Impact's snare strainer is extremely silent when switching on and off; there is virtually no slap of the snares hitting the head. It works well, and has various tension and leveling adjustments.

The drum has two ventholes, each of which is surrounded by a rubber grommet. Impact still provides an internal muffler, which will lock its position on or off at a single touch, and can be adjusted for the degree of dampening desired.

Four covered finishes are available: chrome, black, white, and gray. The drum I tested came with a coated *Ambassador* batter and an *Ambassador* snare-side head. The drum had a full-bodied, bright sound (thanks to the fiberglass shell). It cut through quite well, and rimshots resounded with a good crack. The extended snares helped to give this drum a crisp, snappy response. Even at its 4 1/2" depth, it was still able to provide a high-pitched, lively piccolo sound. I would consider using Impact's drum in many situations—even as a primary snare drum, since it will also tune down lower and still retain a solid sound. The suggested retail price is \$270.00.

R.O.C.



R.O.C. makes many different sized snare drums—some even "exotic." Most of their drums, including the 5 x 13 piccolo I tried, are made of 10-ply mahogany/oriental hickory.

R.O.C.'s 5 x 13 snare has six double-ended lugs, all backed with felt. It uses a simple side-throw strainer, with 11" 16-strand wire snares. A lock on/off internal muffler is installed. The drumshell has very acute bearing edges cut on both sides, which finely slope down for the first 3/4 inch or so of the shell. The primary, head-seating edge is quite thin.

An R.O.C. silver-spot clear head was fitted on the batter side, and a milky-white smooth head was on the snare side. I don't have much faith in these heads; they fit very tightly to the shell, negating any positive influence the thin edges may have on the drum's tone and response. Along with the fact that the wire snares were two inches shorter than the diameter of the snare head, the drum sounded dry and choked. It did have a quick decay, but was not as "snappy" as others. The drum had the capability for loud volume, but sensitivity for quiet playing was unfortunately not there. The drum retails at a suggested price of \$166.00.

R.O.C. also sent a 4 1/2 x 14 drum, made of 10-ply poplar/maple/oriental mahogany, covered in chrome. It has ten felt-backed, double-ended lugs, a parallel strainer with 20-strand split snares (along with a steel rod through the shell), the same acutely formed bearing edges, plus a lock on/off internal muffler. The strainer has a fine-tension knob on both ends, and works with a lever release. It's fairly massive, having two steel guard rails per side, and worked rather stiffly, I thought.

Physically, the lugs on this drum were not centered on the shell, and in a few instances, actually touched the bottom head hoop. This might cause some tuning problems with the snare head. The drum came with transparent batter and snare-side heads. It had good attack and more snap to it than the 5 x 13, although it was still a bit dry-sounding. This snare drum did respond well at its higher tunings, but would benefit immensely from different heads. The drum lists for \$159.00.

R.O.C. says they've learned to "manipulate" wood for specific performance abilities, and can also do shells ranging from five to 15 plies using mahogany, maple, birch, teak, rosewood, luan, poplar, oak, bubinga, burl, or eucalyptus. PVC covering is standard (in black, white, blue/white, wine red, or midnight blue). Mylar and bubinga burlwood finishes are extra. Other piccolo-type sizes available are 4 x 14, 6 1/2X 13, 8 x 13, 5 x 12, 6 1/2 x 12, and 8 x 12. (On the other end of the spectrum, they make a 14 x

AN UNSUNG HERO

The drumming world has committed a felony. On August 17, 1987 arguably the greatest drummer of all time passed on. His death was only acknowledged by a single while meaningful article in the back of this magazine, the heartfelt act of one of his students. With that his importance was put to bed by the drumming world.

Approximately two years before, the only article relating his career barely scratched the surface, and with his quiet passing his significance has been brushed over. Subsequent interviews with many of his former students (*some of today's most famous and successful drummers*) failed to mention his influence. Shockingly, his importance is being so underweighted that one wonders if people actually know what this man accomplished.

The fact is that **Gary Chester** played on more important records than any drummer of all time. Most studio musicians only last five to seven years, Gary's career lasted thirty years. While his most memorable recordings are Rock, R&B, Pop and Soul, his early live playing was Big Band and Jazz with greats of the forties and fifties. To detail his career would take on an entire issue of this magazine, so let it suffice to say that if anyone ever picks up a drumstick with out listening to this man's playing then they haven't learned the first rudiment. The veterans of the music industry regard him as the best there ever was, simply one of a kind. On only one occasion was I honored to see Gary play and what I witnessed was something that no drummer of today possesses. His feel was a vintage that is just not available today.

For the family of **Gary Chester**, as well as his students, friends and colleagues, the only way for right to be done is for all drummers to go back and examine his influence and then realize that one can never say enough about the drummer who did it all.

In The Still Of The Night—*The Five Satins*
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May this small selection of recordings serve to familiarize people with the Artistry of the Greatest Drummer of all time. On behalf of the family, friends, students, and colleagues of

GARY CHESTER
May His Memory Live On!

14 snare drum on legs!

In fairness to R.O.C., I'd like to temper any comments pertaining to the hardware on their drums with the statement that, according to company president Glen Quan, their entire focus is on their shells. They feel that using generically available, moderate-cost hardware helps them to keep overall drum cost down, and that they can more than make up for any acoustic deficiencies that the hardware might cause by what they can do with the shells. In addition, they are more than happy to create drums for customers using any specific brand of hardware desired.

TEMPUS



Tempus Instruments of Canada is offering a 4 1/2 x 14 fiberglass piccolo snare drum. Their drum has ten double-ended lugs, with nylon washers on the rods to cancel metal-to-metal contact. Tempus's shell is different from Impact's fiberglass shell in that the interior has a black matted texture, rather than being smooth. Also, the exterior colored finish is part of the shell itself, instead of a laminated covering.

Since Tempus doesn't produce its own strainer unit, the drum I received was fitted with a Drum Workshop cross-lever throw-off and a Pearl adjustable-slide butt. The throw-off operates smoothly and is easy to adjust. The lever is pretty much flush with the top of the drum so that it doesn't get in the way. Twenty-strand wire snares are used, and are attached via plastic strips.

The drum came fitted with coated Ambassador batter and *Diplomat* snare-side heads. Tuned to its upper limits, this drum has a very loud, piercing sound. Due to the fiberglass shell, it's brighter than most, allowing it even more cutting power. (At times, it came close to hurting my ears!) There is no internal muffler, but a thin *Zero Ring* dampened out any annoying ring. Throughout its tuning range, the Tempus drum spoke clearly, and at the piccolo level, had a nice "pop."

Fiberglass is less prone to being affected by temperature and humidity changes than wood. The sound is not as warm as wood, of course, but the reflective qualities of fiberglass make for a nice, bright piccolo snare sound.

Available shell colors are yellow, red, black, white, grey, and blue. Other colors are available on a custom basis (as per the Ferro Enamels color chart). The 4 1/2 x 14 retails at \$297.00. When I last spoke to Tempus, they had successfully developed a 6 x 13 drum, and were experimenting with other sizes.

Previous *Product Close-Up* columns have reviewed these other piccolo snares: Joe Montineri soprano drums: 4 x 12, 5 x 12 (September 1987); Premier 2024: 4 x 14 (March 1988); Yamaha SD-493: 3 1/2 x 14 (March 1988). For a complete overview of available piccolo snare models, check out *MD's latest Equipment Annual*.

CORRECTION

Hank Jarajillo's column entitled "A Chorus Line" [Tracking, June '88] indicated that Hank had played on the original soundtrack recording of the Broadway show of the same name. This was an editorial misinterpretation of Hank's original manuscript. Although Hank has been playing in the orchestra for *A Chorus Line* since six months after the show opened, he would like it made clear that the drumming on the soundtrack recording was done by Allen Herman. *MD* offers its apologies to both gentlemen for the confusion.

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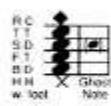
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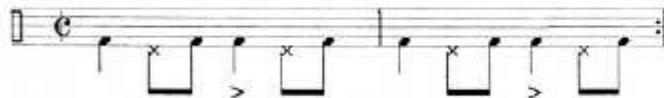
Samba

MUSIC KEY

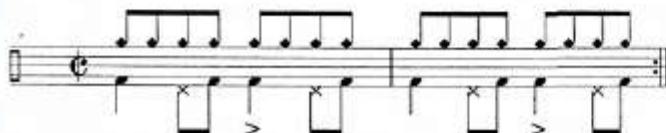


In my last article, I demonstrated some authentic samba rhythms, and showed how they could be played on the snare and bass drums while the ride cymbal played a modified 4/4 ride pattern. Now I would like to show you some ride cymbal variations, as well as how to play time on the kit without relying on a steady cymbal beat, i.e., playing on the drums,

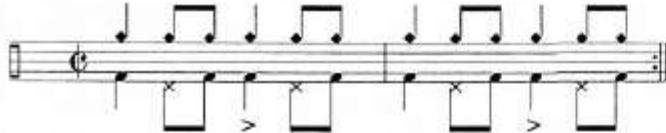
First, let's establish what the feet are playing:



Here are some cymbal variations you can try while playing samba. If the tempo is not too fast, you can comfortably play this: Ride Cymbal (or closed hi-hat) moderate tempo



Another pattern that is effective is the straight 8th-note interpretation of the jazz ride-cymbal pattern:



You can also just play quarter notes:



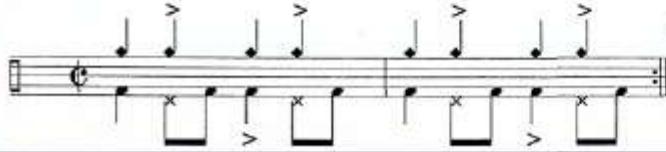
Try accenting different quarter notes; for example, on beats 1 and 3. (These kinds of accents work really well when played on the bell of the cymbal.)



Now, try this:



The bell tone really cuts through. Now try accenting the offbeats:



And then, play just the offbeats:



All of these cymbal variations work particularly well with samba-type snare drum rhythms, as well as the half-time backbeat rhythm. The half-time backbeat opens up the different levels of time going on in the music, and complements the "two" feel that is so important to samba. It also clearly takes us into more of the "fusion" realm, i.e. jazz, or improvised music, that has elements of straight 8th-note music in it (pop, rock, R&B, ethnic, etc.).

Try this half-time backbeat with the previous and following cymbal patterns:



Here are some extensions of the off-beat cymbal idea with the backbeat:



I played this beat on the Weather Report recording of "Black Market," on the 8:30 album (M.M. = 120):



The reason for playing these different variations is to make your music (and music-making) more interesting.

Now let's try some beats where we use more of the drumset. In the following two examples, the right hand plays the ride cymbal and floor tom notes, while the left hand plays the snare drum notes :



by Peter Erskine



Variations



Follow the sticking pattern on the next example.



This is only the beginning. You can create all sorts of patterns and feelings by using different accents, placement (orchestration on the drumset), textures, and so on. Here, for example, is a beat that I really like to play; it's a brush/stick combination. To make it easier to read, the individual hand parts have been written on separate staves, with the left hand on the top staff and the right hand on the bottom staff. The right hand 8th-note pattern (like we

played on the cymbal earlier) is often played on the snare drum with a brush. Play the quarter note "swirled," or slid across the head of the snare, in a left-to-right circular pattern, with the 8th notes played regularly. The left hand plays the cross-stick and small tom notes. Once you are comfortable playing the hands together, add the samba bass drum and hi-hat pattern. A good tempo to work this up to is quarter note = 158.



I picked that up from some recordings with Grady Tate, and used it on the tune "My Ship," from my first solo album.

To get a better idea as to how these patterns, as well as others, work within samba, I strongly recommend listening to the following: any Antonio Carlos Jobim recordings, old Sergio Mendes albums, any recordings with Airto Moreira, and Eliane Elias' *Cross Currents* (Denon compact disc). Jack DeJohnette and I are playing drums on this one.

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Kurt

effe of sound that people like to categorize as New Age. That's thoroughly exciting to me." Using only electronic equipment and performing standing up rather than sitting down, Wortman shares the spotlight with de Grassi. Yet, Wortman doesn't actively pursue the onstage attention. "The key is to make the technology that I use to create sound seem transparent," he says. "I don't want the audience to focus in on where the percussion sounds are coming from. I'm more interested in their hearing and absorbing what I'm adding to the music in the form of rhythm."

RS: How did you get involved with Alex de Grassi?

KW: Originally, the connection goes back to 1981 and an album called *Clockwork*. Alex called me up, as well as another musician, Patrick O'Hearn, when we were in a band called Group 87. Up to that point, Alex had done only solo acoustic albums, but for *Clockwork* he wanted more of a band sound. The drums on that record are mine. There's not a lot of them, but the experience was enough to get involved with Alex and his music.

RS: You didn't continue to play with him from that point on, right?

KW: No, I didn't. We began playing together fairly regularly last year. Alex called me up again, this time to do a quartet tour with him. Alex played guitar, Mark Egan played bass, Clifford Carter played keyboards, and I was the drummer. On some dates on the East Coast, Danny Gottlieb played drums instead of me. Anyway, during this tour, there were a couple of pieces where only Alex and I would play. They worked so well that the idea for this duo tour was hatched from the success we experienced last year.

RS: Is it difficult to play with de Grassi? He seems to have a guitar style that doesn't lend itself quite so easily to rhythmic accompaniment.

KW: That's true. He's unlike any other guitar player I've performed with. His rapid, intense fingerpicking style is very rhythmic, which, you'd think, sounds best unaccompanied. But I think both Danny [Gottlieb] and I enhance Alex's music when we accompany him. We certainly don't compete with him.

RS: Is there, or has there been, a problem with volume? After all, de Grassi plays acoustic guitar. It may be amplified, but it's still acoustic and still rather soft.

KW: It was an adjustment that I had to make. He uses a pickup and a microphone in order to preserve as much of the acoustic sound as possible. I tried to play quietly and somewhat restrained right from the



Photo by Robert Santelli

In a very unassuming way, drummer Kurt Wortman is breaking new ground. He's helping to pave a path in a contemporary music form where drummers have rarely ventured in the past. The music is New Age, that often airy, always soothing hybrid of world folk, jazz, pop, and classical music strains.

Since its inception, New Age has been the music form that certain critics love to flatten. They deride the music as possessing a sound suitable for a hot-tub party and no more meaningful than what you hear in an elevator. But thanks to Wortman and a handful of other drummers, New Age may soon have a new sound—and a new reputation.

One listen to Wortman and guitarist Alex

de Grassi on stage in the small New Jersey shore venue called Club Bene, and it's obvious that New Age they're playing is hardly sedate or sleepy. Although de Grassi's acoustic guitar doesn't ring out the way a rock or jazz guitar might, Wortman's sampled percussion setup is pumping out complicated rhythm runs that fill out the music and allow it to take on a more demanding direction. If this is New Age, it's New Wave New Age.

"I'm really quite happy with the results we've been getting," says Wortman backstage after the show. "It's amazing how you can change the sound of this music by giving it a sense of rhythm. What I'm doing is bringing my sense of drums and drumming to what I view as an expanded pal-

Wortman

beginning, and it's worked. But I've got to say that there were moments on that quartet tour, for example, where the rhythm section simply overpowered Alex. It wasn't intentional, of course, but that's what happened. But later on, when Alex and I played the Telluride Jazz Festival in Colorado, we experimented even further. We worked on the volume problem and the integration of the rhythms I was producing with his guitar. It worked so well that we got a standing ovation from the festival audience. Needless to say, that made us feel real good.

RS: What is your musical background? Did you study in a formal setting before embarking on your career?

KW: I studied with a lot of Bay Area teachers when I was starting out, like George Marsh and Smiley Winters. When I was 17, I played in my first band. It was a rock 'n' roll band, and we played a lot of Santana, Chicago, Jethro Tull—that sort of rock. The group was lead by a flute player. I also attended San Francisco State as a music major, but it was more off and on than steady. I left school when I realized that I was more interested in performing and playing as much as I could than sitting in class. I played with Van Morrison, Jan Garbarek, Eddie Harris, Mark Isham, and Group 87. I also played some rock, but I did a lot more jazz gigs.

RS: And now you're becoming known as a New Age drummer. I know many so-called New Age artists scoff at the term. Do you?

KW: I absolutely resist the term. I mean, I've recorded a fair number of things with Windham Hill, it's true. But I've also done a lot of other stuff. The term "New Age drummer" almost doesn't exist. I've done a lot of sessions and live dates with New Age players. But I'd consider myself a jazz player more than anything else. Now Alex is labeled a New Age artist, because that's where he came from. He got his first bit of notoriety as a New Age artist.

RS: You and drummers such as Stuart Nevitt of Shadowfax have been called "New Age drummers." Yet, you say the term doesn't really exist. Can you explain that?

KW: Sure. Because a drummer or percussionist plays in a New Age style doesn't mean he's a New Age drummer—not when he does a lot of other kinds of music, too. I mean, if someone said to me, "Name a great New Age drummer," I couldn't think of one. Maybe that will change in the future.

RS: If more drummers follow your lead, then perhaps it will change.

KS: That's true.

RS: Your stage setup certainly gives your audience the impression that what you're

playing is new and unusual. Can you give me a rundown of your equipment?

KW: I have a minimal setup, but I really believe I get maximum results out of it. As you know, I'm not using a standard acoustic drumset. I'm using the Sequential Circuits Studio 440 as my sampler. I also use two Octapads MIDled together so I can have 16 sound sources. A 17th sound comes from the DW trigger pedal that is attached to the 440. I assign whatever sound I want to it. So, I have 17 different sample sound sources at any given time. I also have four Paiste cymbals—two 6" splashes, a China-type, and a Flatride. I don't use the cymbals a tremendous amount because you don't ride a lot with this type of music; it's not appropriate. Sometimes it's hard for me because I come from that ECM jazz school of cymbal playing.

RS: How did you make the adjustment?

KW: It's been weird, but really interesting. People are starting to refer to me as a percussionist. I try to resist it. When I first heard it, it drove me crazy. I used to tell people, "I'm not a percussionist, I'm a drummer." Now I've more or less resigned myself to whatever they call what I do. I know that I'm a drummer first and everything else second. That's what counts.

But to answer your question, I've had to adapt myself to Alex's guitar style and to New Age in general, not only pertaining to volume and cymbals, but to a lot of other things. Alex plays a lot of inner rhythms. My first approach to that was to do the normal drummer thing—two- and four-bar patterns. But what I wound up doing was mimicking what he was playing. So now I lock into patterns, but I go up and down dynamically. I'm also using a lot of melodic sounds. Because of all of this, I've really grown as a drummer.

RS: What drummers have you looked to for influence and inspiration?

KW: The question has a two-part answer. As far as what I'm doing now with Alex, there are no players whom I've emulated. But as far as drumming in general goes, I can point to players like Tony Williams, Jack DeJohnette, and Elvin Jones.

RS: Do you consider yourself a pioneer of sorts when it comes to drummers who are interested in New Age music? Certainly what you're doing with Alex de Grassi is turning a few heads.

KW: I do consider myself a pioneer. The reason I say that is because of the response I've been getting from people after the show. Drummers are constantly coming up to me and saying, "Wow! What were you doing up there? What is this?" as they point to my 440 and pads. I tell them that I'm using a

sample setup and that I make my own sound samples. To tell you the truth, I'm amazed that other drummers aren't using a setup like I have. I'm a pioneer, but only by default. No one else has jumped in to do what I'm doing.

RS: And why is that? Why aren't there more drummers experimenting within the parameters of New Age and with the equipment that you're using?

KW: I don't know. Maybe the term "New Age" scares them. I prefer to call what Alex and I play "New Ethnic World Music." The rhythms we employ have nothing to do with New Age. A lot of New Age record companies wouldn't accept what we're doing. They'd tell us that there was too much percussion going on.

RS: You and Alex are also doing a bit of improvising.

KW: That's right. I can be a snob and say that what we're doing musically is very jazz-based, but I wouldn't call it jazz at all. We dip into jazz, but our music has a lot of soul to it, too. It's certainly not background music as a lot of New Age music supposedly is. At times, the music we play is very intense. I think that's pretty obvious.

RS: It is indeed. You add to the interest as well as the intensity on stage by standing up rather than sitting down when you play.

KW: Oh yeah, that's definitely true. I use my right foot very sparingly. I don't use it the way I would when I'm in a more traditional setup with acoustic drums. I really don't use my left foot, either. My left and right hands, however, are constantly in motion.

RS: I guess rudimental exercises would prepare a drummer for what you're doing.

KW: Yeah, they would. They would give a drummer that fluidness you need. But on a drumset you tend to go up and down and lift up and move to another drum, even if the motion is very rapid. What I do is move laterally between the small pads.

RS: I know Stu Nevitt of Shadowfax listens to a lot of world music at home for both inspiration and new ideas. Do you do the same?

KW: I listen to more music in my car than I do in my house. Strangely, I listen to a lot of pop and a lot of jazz, and some rock, too, of course. Basically, I listen to stuff that really grooves. Yet, I'll also listen to Indian and other ethnic music. When I was a kid, I used to go see Santana a lot. I'm talking about early Santana bands, back when they played the Fillmore West. I especially listened to [Jose] Chepito Areas, the timbales player in the band. I recently ran into him in San Francisco. I walked downstairs to let my girlfriend into the place where Alex

and I were rehearsing, and this guy was standing there. I immediately knew who he was. He looked at me and said, "Hey, remember me? 'Black Magic Woman'?" I yelled, "Chepito!" We talked, and he said that he heard some guys were jamming upstairs. He wanted to bring up his timbales and jam. He was like a hero to me when I was a kid. When I used to do drum exercises, I'd put on Santana records and improvise within what I heard.

RS: You said before that, since you've been playing with Alex, you have drummers coming up to you and asking about your equipment and your role onstage. Are they simply curious, or do they seem moved enough to perhaps emulate what you're

doing in some capacity?

KW: There are two reactions I get. One is a timid one. There are drummers who are fearful that I have some knowledge that they don't. That's not true. Some, though, seem relieved when they find out what I'm doing. You can see them saying to themselves, "Oh, I could probably do that."

RS: Do you give out advice?

KW: I do, especially when it comes to equipment.

RS: What do you tell them?

KW: I tell them to spend very little, because the equipment is out of date before you know it. Don't skimp, though. Spend maybe \$3,000 on some good-sounding equipment. Strive to get the best product

you can, and then just dive into it.

RS: Do you think that in the future there will be more work for drummers within the realm of New Age?

KW: Yes, I do. Within the circle of musicians I'm involved with—Patrick O'Hearn, Alex, Mark Isham—there's a growing demand for percussion and rhythm. And these three names are pretty big names in New Age. I read an article the other day where Patrick was called a New Age solo master. But the key here is that all three artists are now writing music that is very rhythmic as opposed to the more traditional styles of New Age. If these guys are writing very rhythmic music and it's still being called New Age music, then the scope of New Age is definitely changing. And that's good news for drummers who want to explore something new and different. Prior to this, drummers were pretty much excluded from the New Age process. That's definitely changing. I'm a product of that change, as a matter of fact.

RS: The best thing about New Age becoming more rhythmic is that it will undoubtedly be more stimulating. The old connotations of New Age—namely, that the music is overly gentle, almost to the point of making you drowsy—might become obsolete. That's got to be good for the music.

KW: Oh, yeah. When I play with Alex or any other so-called New Age artist, I see my job as one in which I strive to get people's bodies moving.

RS: What about when you are in the studio? Does your approach to the music change?

KW: In the studio, things are more compositional, so I do a lot more thinking before playing. You can get away with a lot of stuff live. But in the studio, it's going to sound far too busy if you put everything in that you might put in on stage. So, I tend to work from a compositional viewpoint in the studio and take one part at a time. Live, I really go for the control and smoothness of the performance, but I also shoot for a lot of excitement.

RS: Which do you prefer more, studio work or live dates?

KW: It's funny. When I'm in the studio, I'll say to myself, "Yeah, this is where it's at. The money's good. I'm learning a lot. I'm getting a lot done." But then I go out on the road and I go, "Boy, this is great. I perform for people and get that instant feedback. I'm getting to see places." The truth is, I consider myself a performer, be it in the studio or up on the stage.

RS: Over the next few months, who will you be touring with?

KW: I'll certainly tour with Alex, and also with Patrick O'Hearn. But the tour I'm really looking forward to—which I believe begins in October—is one with guitarist Dave Tom, bassist Mick Karn, Mark Isham—who will be playing synths and trumpet—and Terry Bozzio. I'll be playing electronic percussion. It ought to be quite a tour.

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practice.

In Jany's review, she mentioned that some of the views chosen by the camera operator occasionally restrict the viewer during crucial closeups. Jany, this is not the Michael Jackson *Thriller* video; this is an instructional vibraphone video. The shots were designed to show technique and execution of musical passages. We purposely wanted hands to be seen and tried to cover a lot of the keyboard. At the same time, we had to show the performer occasionally to keep interest.

Jany mentions "a debatable choice of verbiage and terminology: Tachoir refers to black or white sets of bars as 'registers,' and calls the independent (or Musser) grip the 'marimba' grip." My response to this is: I'm sorry, Jany, my instrument (a vibraphone) doesn't have black and white bars; I have a silver set and a gold set. This was intentional, not to confuse the beginner and have him looking for something else. Not all mallet players have a piano background. "Register" refers to an instrumental voice. For example, the C scale or natural notes could be one register and the sharps and flats another. My choice of "marimba" grip was a general term. If you would get around more, you might realize that in addition to the Musser grip, there are other independent marimba grips. Ever heard of Leigh Stevens?

Jany said, "Tachoir's doubling of left or right stickings in linear patterns is in direct opposition to a majority of teachers, who expound the virtues of alternate sticking." Jany, where have you been? This is 1988, and the old tilted military snare drum percussion techniques have been passe for some time. This is the contemporary way of performing. Maybe we should have a challenge and see who can execute lines cleaner, faster, and more musical. Remember music that's what I'm striving for not unorthodox technique, or maybe I'm just a creative genius.

Jany goes on to say that my video is inconsistent in aiming at one level of playing ability. Thank you; that is exactly what we wanted. We wanted the beginner to be able to learn the vibes and the advanced student to be able to polish his or her technique and see what others are doing.

Jany goes on to say that some of the beginners will be confused or discouraged. Obviously this reviewer is misguided and confused. I don't know of Jany Sabins and never heard of her, but maybe she should start at the beginning of my video and take it a step at a time. One can't be expected to understand everything in just one viewing.

Jerry Tachoir

Hendersonville TN

Jany Sabins replies: Modern Drummer provides review guidelines to all contributing writers, from which I quote this pertinent portion: "...we prefer to call attention to good material, and ignore the junk. Therefore, if you feel that you cannot give something a fairly positive review, please contact our office and advise us accordingly.

This is not to say that you should ignore any faults; this is only in situations where the faults outnumber the good points."

When I wrote the review of Mr. Tachoir's instructional video, I advised MD that the tone of my review would not be overly positive, and left the matter to their discretion as to whether my judgment was justified and whether the review merited publication at all. They are qualified individuals and, like myself, will seek out (and, in fact, sought out) information to support and/or verify facts and opinions in order to preserve the excellence of the magazine. My views in this case were not solitary or unsupported.

In consideration of Mr. Tachoir's protestations, I can only encourage the discriminating reader to consider my comments in view of the total context of which they are a part. Any journalist worth the proverbial grain of salt knows that arguments may be made for or against an opinion by arbitrary selection of words or stress placed on the language involved. Arguing semantics is a fruitless pursuit; I am more concerned with whether or not the intent of my writing is unclear. As for my musical competence in reviewing, I am more than willing to bow to the judgment of the MD staff and readership should it become apparent that their consensus agrees with Mr. Tachoir's. To my knowledge, it has not done so, thus far.

Debate is healthy. Caveat emptor—let the buyer beware.

LIBERTY DeVITTO

I can't begin to tell you how much I enjoyed the July cover story on Liberty DeVitto. I have long felt that Liberty's contribution was a very significant percentage of Billy Joel's successful sound, and I'm glad that Liberty was given the opportunity to explain how some of that contribution came about. While I enjoyed the description of the Russian tour and the experiences that Liberty and the rest of the band had, I was especially pleased at the depth to which Liberty went when explaining his approach to the various tunes on *The Bridge*. His clear and honest statements regarding his philosophy of drumming were also most refreshing and welcome. He makes a strong case for the fundamental, drum-loving player who doesn't feel compelled to rely on heavy technology in order to perform entertaining and commercially successful music. All I can say is, if Liberty DeVitto is still looking to play a local club gig for a night or two, he's welcome to come and sit in with my band anytime!

Donald Wretroth
Clifton NJ

RON TUTT

Thank you for the super interview with my favorite drummer, Ron Tutt [July '88 MD]. I remember watching the television on January 14, 1973 and seeing Elvis perform live from Hawaii. I was only nine years old at the time, but I'll never forget seeing the

continued on page 92

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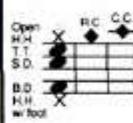
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MUSIC KEY



This month's *Rock Charts* looks at Yes, a group that has been around for a while, and Alan White, the drummer for the group ever since Bill Bruford's departure in the early '70s. From the album *Big Generator* (Atco 90522-1), "Rhythm Of Love" features Alan's identifiable high-pitched snare sound, along with other trademarks: his patent precision and cleverness in modifying something mundane (8th-note rock) into variations that are downright interesting. Alan also instinctively knows that absence makes the ear grow fonder, for when he drops out the bass drum at letter G, his interspersed kicks are all the more effective.

15

(closed hi-hat)

A

4 6 8 10 12 14

B

C

o (simile)

D

(closed hi-hat)

4 6 8

10

E

"Rhythm Of Love"

This page contains 12 staves of musical notation for a single drummer. The notation uses a 5-line staff with various symbols: 'x' for a closed hi-hat, 'o' for an open hi-hat, '>' for a ride cymbal, 'z' for a crash cymbal, and 'f' for a bass drum. The page includes performance instructions such as '(simile)', '(closed hi-hat)', 'G', 'H', '5', '4', '(cym. bell)', and 'repeat and fade'.

Choosing A Mic'

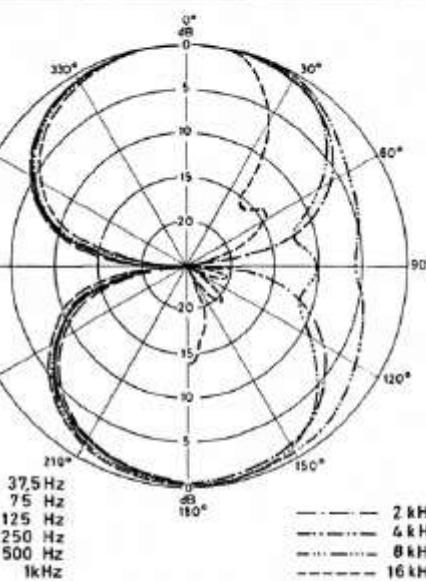
The current boom in electronic drum technology has fostered a change in the drummer's sound and role within music. Thus, today's drummers are quite different from their counterparts of eight to ten years ago. An interesting side effect of this new technology is the modern drummer's re-

transducer, which is the heart of all microphones. A transducer is a device that converts acoustical energy (sound) into electrical energy (AC current). The current is then transmitted down the line to a mixer, amplifier, or tape machine. Many kinds of transducers are available, but the three most important for drum applications are the *moving coil*, the *ribbon*, and the *condenser*.

Moving coil transducers achieve electro-acoustical conversion by suspending a coil of wire attached to a diaphragm within the magnetic field of a permanent magnet.

As sound waves move the diaphragm, the coil is moved within the magnetic field, generating an AC current. This alternating current corresponds directly to the nature of the sound wave creating the diaphragm movement. The result is a very low level audio signal. Microphones employing this type of transducer are generally called "dynamic" mic's.

Ribbon mic's achieve the conversion by suspending a strip of aluminum (or "ribbon") between two permanent magnets. The strip of aluminum acts simultaneously as the diaphragm and the conductor of elec-



tricity. The ribbon is extremely light in weight and can reproduce transients faster and better than a moving coil. Transients—sounds that reach their highest level and decay in a fraction of a second—are common in drum sounds.

Condenser microphones use a diaphragm coated with a conductive material. The diaphragm is suspended between two metal plates that are polarized by an external D.C. supply. Because gold is the best conductor of electricity, the best condenser microphones use it as a diaphragm coating.

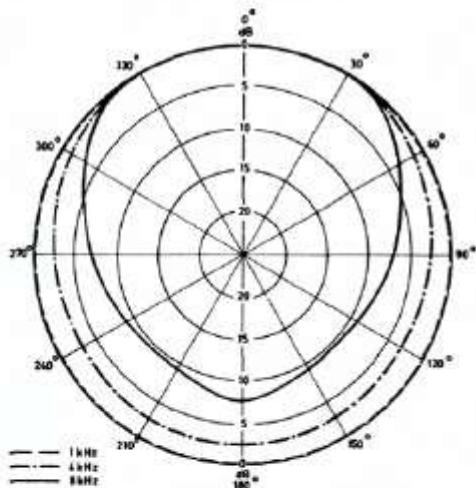
As sound waves move the diaphragm, the distance between the diaphragm and plates will change. This causes a change in capacitance, which can be measured as an alternating current. Condenser microphones have a very fast transient response and are usually quite durable. Most of today's mixing consoles have phantom power supplies that will power condenser mic's. Some condensers can operate with self-contained power supplies.

Different Features

Each type of transducer offers specific features and benefits. Understanding these features is important when choosing the proper type to reproduce the various drums in a kit.

Moving coils are more durable than ribbons and condensers. They can withstand the higher sound pressure levels produced by drums. If the construction of the mic' element is small enough, the transient response is suf-

Figure 1



newed interest in acoustic drums and the methods used to mike and record them. Drummers are discovering that combining acoustic and electronic drums can create a percussion system able to meet the demands of almost any contemporary musical situation.

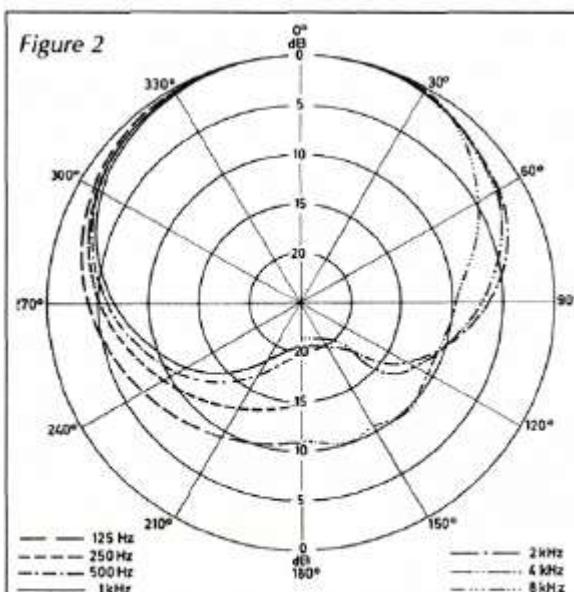
Miking acoustic drums seems intimidating to many drummers, sound reinforcement technicians, and recording engineers. Because drums produce many different frequencies at high sound pressure levels (SPL), they are considered the most difficult instruments to reproduce accurately. However, by examining choice and placement of microphones, many miking problems can be identified.

As the first link in the audio chain, the microphone is of critical importance. Even if the rest of the recording gear in the chain works perfectly, microphone deficiencies will be reproduced intact—especially with digital equipment.

Transducers

The ability to select the right mic' and use it properly depends on a thorough understanding of design characteristics. A good starting place is the

Figure 2



For Acoustic Drums

ficient to reproduce the initial attack transients a drum produces when struck.

Ribbons have an exceptionally fast transient response, allowing the most accurate reproduction of drum sounds. They produce a warm low end, clean, smooth midrange, and a crystal-clear high end. They are, however, more delicate than moving coils and can be susceptible to damage from the high sound pressure level of drums.

Condenser microphones have excellent transient response, produce a higher output than dynamic mic's, and are reasonably durable—all the ingredients of a good drum microphone. Condensers, however, can be very expensive. When considering price versus performance, moving coil mic's are generally the recommended choice. When money is no object, condensers are chosen most often.

drums for better control over the sound.

An omni ("omnidirectional") pattern microphone reproduces sounds arriving from all directions in equal levels (Figure 1). A microphone with a "cardioid" pattern is insensitive to sounds arriving from the rear, but picks up sounds in front (Figure 2). On paper the plot resembles a heart, hence the name "cardioid." A bidirectional (or "figure-eight") pattern is sensitive to sounds coming from 90 degrees off-axis from the front of the microphone and insensitive to sounds coming from both 0 degrees on-axis (directly in front) and from the rear (180 degrees) (Figure 3).

Frequency Response.

A frequency response graph (Figure 4) displays each microphone's tendencies to increase or decrease the output level of certain frequencies. This is extremely important when choosing a mic'.

Each drum has its own particular tone or frequency response based on different shell lengths and materials, head types, and the way the drum is played. For optimum results, a microphone's frequency response should be precisely matched to the sounds of the drum on which it is used. Understanding transducers, polar patterns, and frequency response is vital for choosing and placing microphones when miking a drumkit. Now let's consider each drum individually to determine specific needs and considerations when miking.

Snare Drum

The snare drum exhibits a frequency response primarily in the midrange (500 to 1200 Hz). When miking a snare drum it is essential to use a microphone with a flat (no obvious increases or decreases) frequency response in the midrange. The mic' should be less sensitive to sounds below 500 Hz to prevent it from reproducing the low-end frequencies of the bass drum and floor toms. This is often called a "rolled off" low-end response.

The mic' should have a cardioid polar pattern in order to be insensitive to sounds entering from the rear. Positioned properly, it will reject unwanted sounds from the rack toms, bass drum, or hi-hat, yet accurately reproduce the sound of the snare.



Figure 5

A small mic' will allow proper placement without interfering with the drummer's technique. Finally, a small, lightweight moving coil diaphragm will properly reproduce the fast initial attack transients of the snare drum.

The mic' should be placed 1" to 2" from the top of the drumhead at the rim, with the rear of the mic's cardioid polar pattern facing the rack toms. For a fatter sound, move the mic' closer to the head and more toward the center. A second mic' can be placed under the drum to pick up a more concentrated snare sound. This can then be blended with the sound generated by the top mic'. (Figure 5).

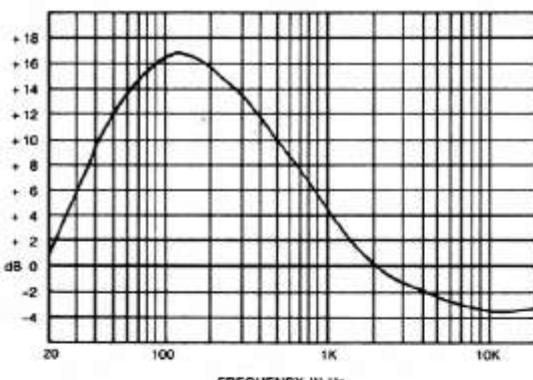
With the double-mic' method, the mic's must be out of phase with each other. A drum having the upper and lower heads on will produce sound waves from the top and bottom that are out of phase with each other. If you mike these out-of-phase sounds and combine them together at the mixing console, you cancel the midrange frequencies of the drum. The resulting sound is unacceptable; it sounds like playing a garbage pail stretched with newspaper. To overcome this problem, one of the microphones should be wired out of phase. Some miking consoles have phase reverse controls that do this.

Another way to alleviate the problem is to split the signal from a single snare mic': One output can be sent to the mix and one to an electronic drum synthesizer that also feeds sound back to the mixer. Then, these two sounds can be blended.

Bass Drum

The bass drum plays a role second only

Figure 4



Terminology

A knowledge of basic mic' terminology and functions can provide valuable insights into the performance capabilities of different microphones. The following are some of the more common terms used in describing the characteristics of a particular mic'.

Polar Pattern. A polar pattern is a printed plot of the microphone's sensitivity to the sounds arriving at all angles in a 360-degree sphere around the mic' head. These patterns indicate particular areas in the sphere where the microphone is either more or less sensitive to sound. Each microphone can be constructed to exhibit a specific polar pattern. This is an important aspect to consider when placing the drum mic's, because it can help to isolate individual

to the snare in the make-up of a good overall drum sound. This drum creates the low frequency tones that make us move our feet.

There are more devices for and opinions on reproducing the sound of the bass drum than on any other part of the drumset. The nature of the bass drum sound, however, demands that—whatever mic' is chosen—it must have certain performance characteristics.

The ability of the mic' to handle high sound pressure levels is essential, since the bass drum can produce sound pressure levels of 130 dB or more. A large diaphragm element is also necessary to reproduce the low-end frequencies and sub-harmonics generated by a bass drum.

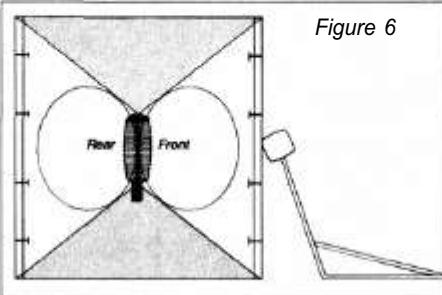
The polar pattern necessary for a bass drum mic' has become a topic of controversy, as new methods employing different types of polar patterns have recently emerged. The one most commonly used is the cardioid polar pattern.

When placed in the drum, this type of microphone is sensitive to sounds from the beater head and to shell "ring." It is insensitive to sounds produced by the front head and to sounds entering the drum from other sound sources (i.e., stage monitors for the drummer). If this type of mic' has a large diaphragm for low-frequency response and can handle high sound pressure levels, a good sound can be achieved.

A technique currently being advanced, however, is the use of a "figure-eight" (or

bi-directional) polar pattern. This pattern offers unique advantages. First, the front of the mic' will be sensitive to sounds generated by the beater. The rear of the microphone will be sensitive to sounds generated by the vibration of the head on the front part of the drum.

When tuned properly, the front head is an integral part of the overall bass drum sound that we hear acoustically. It should be considered when using a mic' to reproduce the sound of a bass drum. Most significantly, a "figure-eight" polar pattern responds to a problem all drummers and engineers try to alleviate: Its off-axis response is designed to be insensitive to the shell's "ring." (Figure 6).



Some engineers feel that using a "figure-eight" pattern for the bass drum in live applications may cause feedback or bleed-through problems. One claim is that the sensitivity at the rear of the mic' will cause it to pick up stage monitors and other instruments. However, if the gain on the mix-

ing console is adjusted to create proper input levels when the mic' is subjected to 120 dB of sound pressure level from the beater, the rear of the mic' will only hear sounds of 120 dB at the same distance the mic' is from the beater. Because the mic' is usually not more than 6" to 8" from the beater, any sound source outside the drum would have to produce a sound pressure level of at least 120 dB, 6" from the rear of the mic'. In practical applications, this almost never occurs.

Considering its advantages, a "figure-eight" polar pattern in a bass drum mic' becomes a very important component when attempting to create the most accurate representation of the bass drum sound.

Hi-hat

The hi-hat exhibits the same frequency range as the snare drum. Therefore, microphone considerations are similar. The mic' should be small so that it can be moved around the hi-hat without interfering with the drummer's technique. It should exhibit a cardioid polar pattern to isolate its sound from the rest of the set.

The hi-hat's frequency response should be rolled off at the low end so it will not reproduce the low frequencies of the bass drum. When positioned, the mic' should point toward the top cymbal (Figure 7) of the hi-hat. This will help to accurately reproduce both the sound of the hi-hat closing and the sound of the drumstick hitting the cymbal.



Figure 7

Rack Toms

Mic's for the rack toms should be small for easy placement and, like the snare and hi-hat mic's, should have small element diaphragms for fast transient response. This way, initial attack tones created by drumsticks hitting the heads of the drums will be accurately reproduced.

Since the sound of the bass drum radiates up and around the rack toms, the rack tom mic's should have a rolled off low-end frequency response as well. This helps to keep the bass drum sounds out of the rack tom mic's.

If your set has only one rack tom, mic' placement is easy. But more drums calls for more mic's, which usually means more problems. Here again, the snare drum is the point of reference. A mic' should be placed 1" to 2" above the head near the upper rim (the one furthest away from the

snare) (Figure 8). Ideally, the cardioid pattern should face the top head, but such a placement would interfere with the drummer's technique.

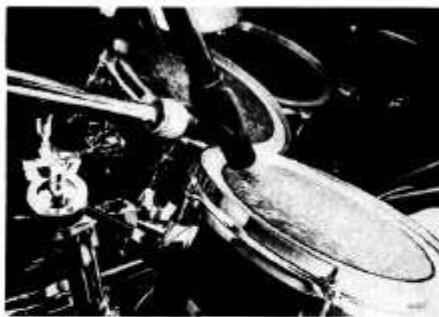


Figure 8

Floor Tom

Floor toms require a full frequency response to capture their true power and tonal capability. Once again, a mic' with a cardioid pattern is the preferred choice. The mic' placement is not as critical as with a rack tom because a floor tom's frequencies will radiate in all directions.

The mic' should be placed near the head, as on a rack tom, and out of the way of the drummer's playing (Figure 9). Pointing the rear of the cardioid polar pattern at the low ride cymbal will help reduce any bleed-through.



Figure 9

Overhead Mic's

Overhead mic's present one of the biggest challenges of drum miking. All too often, engineers indiscriminately place two microphones over the drums in the vain hope of attaining complete coverage. Unfortunately, with this type of miking (two microphones mixed together in mono), the problem of phase cancellation becomes apparent. It occurs because the distance between any multiple sound source (i.e. cymbals) and each of the microphones will be different. The sound from each individual source will arrive at the mic's at different times, and thus will be out of phase with the other sound source. The degree of phase

cancellation will be directly proportional to the difference in distance from each mic' to the sound source.

One way to overcome this problem with a *single* sound source is to observe a simple 3-to-1 distance ratio: The second mic' must be more than three times the distance from the source than the first mic'. But since a drumset presents multiple sound sources, this can be impractical.

The problem can be solved by placing the two overhead mic's at a 45-degree angle to each other (the X-Y technique) (Figure 10). The distance between the sound sources will be the same, eliminating any phase cancellation relationships. Since the objective of the overhead mic's is to reproduce not only the cymbals, but all of the drums as they sound naturally, a mic' with a full frequency response is recommended.

Since crash and ride cymbals produce very fast transients at high frequencies, a condenser microphone is most commonly used for this application. Condensers can be expensive, however, and there are some excellent moving coil alternatives for overheads at a fraction of the cost of condensers.

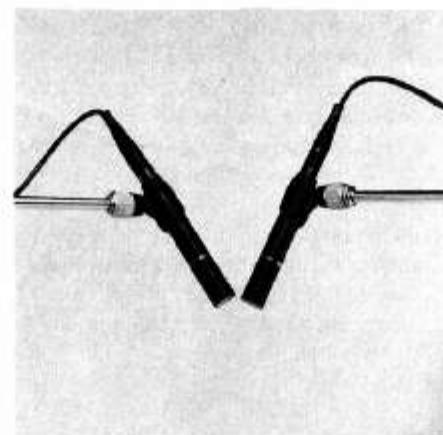


Figure 10

Expertise in the art of mic' choice and placement comes with years of experience. The basic principles outlined here will help those who are just beginning to learn how to successfully reproduce the many sounds of the modern drumkit. If you follow them, your immediate results will surpass your expectations. In addition, experimentation will help to improve your miking skills as much, if not more, than any instruction. *Above all*, begin with properly tuned drums. After all, the right mic's, correctly positioned, can only reproduce badly tuned drums exactly as they sound to the ear, or worse.

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From The Drumset To The Drum Corps: Part 1

Contemporary drum corps explores an extremely wide range of musical idioms. The "drumset-oriented" tunes seem to present serious problems for percussion arrangers and performers alike. Arrangers often fail to distinguish the *characteristics* that differentiate one groove from another, and players frequently interpret all charts in the same manner. This column, as well as future ones, will present examples of how a variety of grooves (idioms) might be written in drum corps or marching band.

For the writer/arranger, there are a few important guidelines to be followed when trying to interpret the drumset to the drumline. First of all, the most basic consideration is the *rhythmic characteristics* of the style in which you are attempting to write. For instance, what rhythmic patterns differentiate a rock groove from a samba, nanege, funk, or jazz tune? Another point to consider is the *textural characteristics* of a style, or what parts of the drumkit are used to portray various idioms (i.e., hi-hat, cymbal bell, heavy toms, snare, etc.). Another important guideline for the writer/arranger is *don't over-write!* Every player does not have to play in every measure. The last thing to keep in mind is to *write it as you would play it*. When writing these parts, you should think as if you were playing the drumset part.

The drum corps players have a few guidelines they should follow as well when interpreting the drumset for drum corps. First of all, *tempo control* is an element of musicianship that is always considered to be a drummer's (or drum section's) most important function. Another guideline for the player is *dynamic sensitivity*. Each person in the section must be keenly aware of how his or her volume level contributes to the ensemble blend and balance. It is important for each player to understand which voices must dominate the ensemble in order for the idiom to be portrayed correctly. Another guideline for the player to follow—which is the key intangible ingredient—is that of *feel*. This is best described in terms of how natural and comfortable a player or ensemble is when performing.

Another guideline is that of *interpretation of the time*. This has to do with where the groove is played in relation to the beat. For instance, should a particular groove be played "on top" of the beat, or in a "laid-back" manner? This critical but often-ignored facet of percussion performance is really an important element of "feel." The secret is to work hard on interpreting time so that it sounds like you don't work at it at all! One other guideline I have for the player is his or her *mind-set*. What I mean by this is allowing your emotions and your body language to flow and change as the music that you are performing flows and changes. Joe Franco's approach to playing would be as out of place in a symphony orchestra as Vic Firth's would be in Twisted Sister! Music is the communication of mood and emotion from writer, through the player, to the listener. Without the emotional involvement of the performer, the writer/arranger's ideas cannot reach the audience.

The following are examples of how I, as a percussion arranger in drum corps, might interpret drumset grooves. This month I will show you a basic rock beat and a funk beat arrangement for the drumline. In future columns, I will cover different types of grooves. In the following examples, the snares are written on the top staff (which includes the closed hi-hat sound indicated with an "x" above the staff), the quads are written on the second (from top) staff, the bass drums are written on the third staff, and the cowbell and tambourine parts are on the bottom staff (the cowbell is notated with an "x" on the fourth space; the tambourine is notated with an "x" on the first space).

Basic Rock

Some of the rhythmic characteristics of a basic rock beat are: a 4/4 meter, a solid 8th-note ride played on either a closed hi-hat or open ride cymbal, a strong 2 and 4 backbeat played on snare, a steady bass drum pattern emphasizing beats 1 and 3, and a tempo of a quarter note = 120-144. The textural characteristics include a "treble" combination of snare, hi-hat, and tambourine, a fairly straight-ahead bass drum "bottom," and little or no tom involvement except during fills.

Funk

Some of the basic rhythmic characteristics of a funk beat include: a 4/4 meter, an intense 16th-note syncopation among the snare, hi-hat, and bass drum, and a slightly slower tempo than a basic rock tempo (quarter note = 112-120). The textural characteristics include a

"treble/bass" combination of snare and hi-hat with bass drums that must interact to create the net ensemble sound, and the cowbell and tambourine are added for color rather than for basic rhythmic pulse.

The musical score consists of 12 staves of 16 measures each. The notation is as follows:

- Measures 1-8:** The left side shows a steady pattern of strokes on the snare and bass drum. The right side features a bass drum on the first measure, followed by a dynamic marking *mf*, then a pattern of strokes on the snare and bass drum.
- Measures 9-16:** The left side shows a steady pattern of strokes on the snare and bass drum. The right side features a bass drum on the first measure, followed by a dynamic marking *mf*, then a pattern of strokes on the snare and bass drum.



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ply to seriously studying anything else.
AB: That's because it's supposed to look easy. If it doesn't look easy, you're doing it wrong.

DF: How do you make it look easy?

AB: I keep it simple. I also feel that it's got to be accessible; it's got to be competitive on the radio with everything else. But I like to throw in a few things that attract attention. Lately, I'm getting into fills on the bass drum—even if that's not really the function of the bass drum. The function of the bass drum is to lay down the most solid beat. If you have a moment where the beat can stop and there's a hole, you can make an exception to your bass-drum-being-simple rule. Using the bass drum in fills really opens up a lot of different territory. When I first started making records, I used to do bass drum fills all the time—maybe in excess. I evolved to a point, somewhere around "The Reaper." I was still getting pretty busy then, but right after the big commercial success, I started simplifying my drum parts. I found that I preferred the simpler drum styles of Simon Kirke and people like that.

DF: What's your favorite drum track you've recorded?

AB: "Burnin' for You" is one of my favorites. That's just Donald Roeser and me. We tried several times to get it to sound right with the whole band, but it always sounded too cluttered, or one thing or another was wrong. One time, Donald and I happened to be in a studio, the rest of the band had

gone home, and Donald said, "Let's give it a shot." It was just Donald and me on the track. He played the bass, too. But I had a pretty clear idea how I wanted to present all the fills and stuff. I could've played it without anybody else. But you always have artistic remorse—if you're any kind of artist. You're never really satisfied, even if the thing sells 20 million. I'm sure with Michael Jackson, if you looked really deep inside his heart, you would see places where he thought, "Oh man, that guitar sound on 'Beat It' is a little thin." It's always something. So I feel like maybe if we'd recorded the lead guitar simultaneously with the drums, instead of the rhythm, we could've gotten something a little more happening. But I just sort of plowed ahead, doing my own thing. Later on, he overdubbed the lead and tried to match up to my drums. There are things I would make better, if the lead and drums were locked in really tight.

DF: Live, you've always sounded heavier and more powerful than the way your performance has been recorded.

AB: With the Cult, we didn't really get a chance to play the songs very much before they were recorded. Sometimes it wasn't even worked out until we got in the studio. Then, of course, you go out and play it 500 times in a row and you get it right eventually.

DF: How do you approach the individual components of the drumset?

AB: Well, with the snare, it's important to hit a clear, solid shot right to the center of the drum. I like to hit a rimshot every time. First of all, to lay the stick in there for a rimshot, there's not a whole lot of variation as far as where you can put the stick.

It's very important to have an ultra-consistent snare and bass drum sound for recording. You've got to get the meters going to the exact same spot every time. I never practiced with meters, but I would always go into the playback, and if they weren't reading like that, I'd want to do it again. The muffler system that I have allows me to hit consistent rimshots without a lot of ring and without losing any power doing it.

DF: Don't you have a rather special snare drum that's had a career of its own?

AB: That's my *Black Beauty*, a Ludwig snare. It's some brass alloy. They stopped making it for a while. But due to popular demand, I'm told, it's available again. It's a 6 1/2" drum. I used it on "Burnin' For You." And I lent it to Thommy Price, although I wasn't going to mention his name in this interview because he didn't mention mine in his! I hired him to do my solo record. Originally, it was just to do the demos, but I liked working with him so much that I had him do the record. In rehearsal, we did some double drumming, which was quite amazing. But when it came time to record the songs that were supposed to have the double drumming in them, the engineer was like, "Oh man, this is too much." It literally took two or three days to get Thommy's sound. It was just ridiculous. So

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he didn't want to take another two or three days to get a sound out of another drumset. We were rolling; we didn't want to stop and go through all of this stuff. So I let Thommy be the drummer.

What happened first was, we really got into what we liked about the scene right now, drumming-wise. For instance, we both freaked out about Phil Collins. We thought, "This guy is amazing." Then we'd trade versions of each one of his licks. We pretty much analyzed everything he put out at that point. I'm not talking about the early Genesis stuff, but Peter Gabriel's third album and Collins' first solo record, *Face Value*. And we'd compare what we could hear him doing to what we saw in the videos. We really got into heavily analyzing it. It wasn't only Phil Collins, but other drummers as well; we went through our favorite Bonham licks. Bonham and Phil Collins were the main ones.

DF: There are probably a lot of drum freaks who'd love to have been the fly on the wall. It's too bad you didn't record it. So what did Thommy do with your *Black Beauty* snare?

AB: After we finished the recording session, he got a gig to do the record for Scandal. I was over at his house one day, and he said, "You know, I really like your black snare drum. Can I borrow it for these sessions?" I said, "Sure, no problem." So I gave him the snare drum, and they did that album with "The Warrior" on it. And I believe that he was using my snare drum. It sounds like it. At the time, I wasn't doing any drumming. I was working on my solo album, doing the vocals, the guitars, and all the other stuff. Then, while he was doing the Scandal record, he started working with

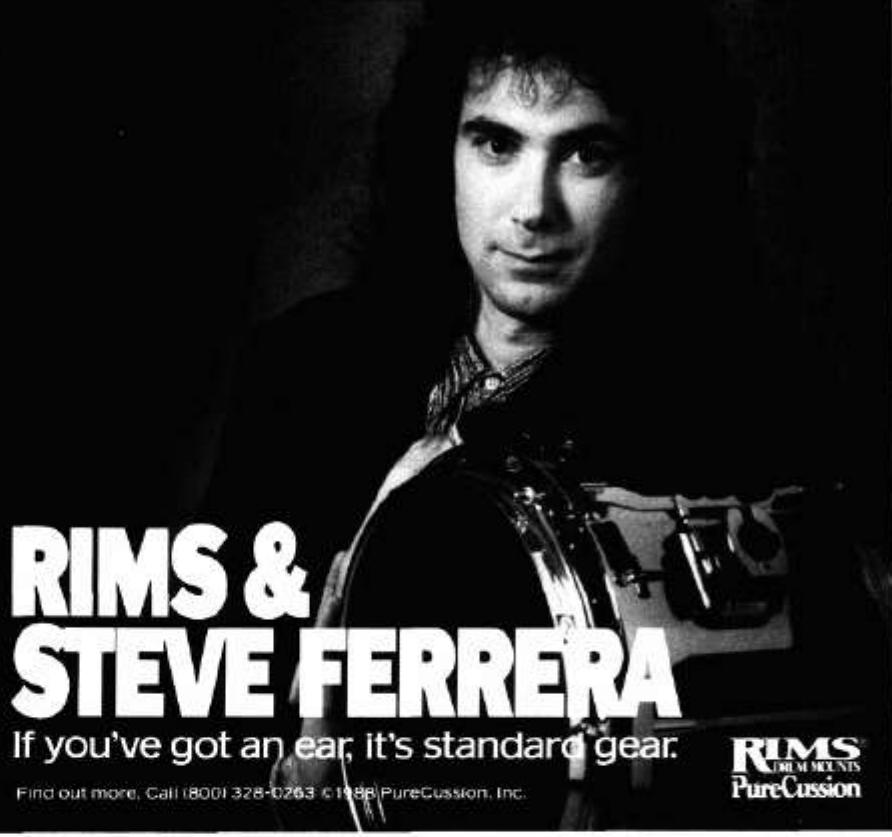
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Billy Idol. I think they were briefly in the same studio. He'd do Scandal downstairs, then go upstairs and do Billy Idol. He used my drum on "Rebel Yell," too. It's a proven drum.

He gave it back with a small modification that actually made it a lot better. He took the muffler head and revised it. Originally, it was made out of rubber and it deadened the sound, diminished it a little bit, made it not quite as loud. The idea was to take off the ring without really deadening the sound. So he substituted an old drumhead that he cut up in the same shape. It worked just as well for killing the ring, yet it did not lay on the head so heavy that it really killed the sound.

DF: What about your other drums?

AB: Well, the bass drum technique is something that I modified after playing with Thommy. I used to put a lot of stuff in the bass drum to damp it. Now I don't use anything. And I use the bass drum beater itself to dampen the bass drum. I hit the drum and hold the bass drum beater into the head. It's got to be loose enough that you can do this. If it's too tight, it'll just go "brrrrrruppp." It'll make multiple beats. With no padding, the bass drum is louder, and because you're damping it with your foot, you have more control and more variation on the sound. When you're playing very fast, it's automatically damping from the time you hit it before.

I use all different kinds of pedals, but I like a *Speed King*, except for the fact that they always squeak and you have to keep oiling them. It's mysterious, because you can't figure out where the squeak is coming from, and you have to coat the thing in oil. My new favorite is the Drum Workshop double bass setup. I'd love to work out a deal with them. The bass drum parts I've been playing lately are a little different from what I used to play. I think I played a lot of 16th- and 8th-note parts, whereas now I'm playing half notes. That seems to help the sound—a clear shot for the bass drum and a clear shot for the snare drum.

My overall philosophy for sound organization—which I try to teach in lessons—is that as you go down the sound spectrum, you get wider sound waves, which have to be more organized so they don't create beats. So the stuff that tends to be fast and crazy should be on the higher sounding

parts of the kit—the snare drum, the cymbals. And as you go down to the floor tom and the bass drum, it starts to get simpler.

DF: How do you teach this to people?

AB: Well, the lesson is divided into three parts. The first part is technique. That can include the rudiments, the drumset rudiments—any aspect of the technique. I believe that the technique of doing it is really what I'm teaching, so that's the most important thing. The second part of the lesson is stuff we've gone over or want to go over, like a fill, or some record that I think is cool. More or less, it's the same thing I did with Thommy Price; we'd go through records that we liked. Or maybe it's my records. A lot of people who come to me are into the way I play drums, and they want to know: "How do you play that weird 'Godzilla' beat?" It's really not that weird if you understand what it is. And I write out all the phrases. Not that I'm into reading that much, it's just so you can see it. It's more input, and it's easier to visualize what, exactly, you're doing. The third part of the lesson is whatever the students want to go over. If they have a tape that they made or something that they're excited about and

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they'd like to go over that, it's more or less their time. I'm their servant; I do whatever they want in the last part of the lesson. And what's also important is to try to encourage individual expression and creativity.

And the students motivate me, too. I tried all of these radical things—playing songs without cymbals, leaving certain things out—but there was a certain element of swing and attack I'm only starting to get into since I've been teaching. It gives me a way to go inside drumming that I couldn't get inside before. I cannot be caught off guard. I have to know more than my students—why you're using this sticking pattern, which hand you're going to start or end with. I go back and deal with these old rudiments and minute technical details that passed me by when I was learning because I was in a hurry to get to the other part—like Madison Square Garden.

DF: Talk about your "drum corps" idea.
AB: When the Soft White Underbelly signed with Elektra Records, they gave us a producer who played me a tape from the South Sea Islands, somewhere in Polynesia, a group of two to 400 people—and all it was was drummers and singers. It was some of

the most amazing music I'd ever heard. They'd be playing along or singing along, and all of a sudden, they'd be shouting in this chant—haiwhachahaiah! It was a big sound, lots of dynamics. Since then, I've wanted to make a record with that kind of sound. The primitive thing has already been notated, recorded, and all that. I was thinking of trying to make something that related to the modern world that would be just singers and drummers. And I hope some of the drummers will be some of my students.

DF: Do you ever think you should have listened to your mother?

AB: What she said was, "A musician's life isn't for you. It's too hard. There are too many traps." But I never saw myself as a "rock star." I don't want to get like Mick Jagger. I know the guy is talented, but he's got it a little too easy now. His biggest problem is being tempted by drugs or women or whatever. I'm a musician. I'm a music freak. And I'll keep doing it until I'm too old or senile to do anything. I'm addicted to it.



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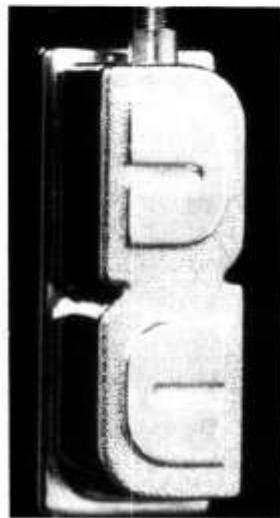
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huge double-bass set and the man playing it with such power and grace. I was so impressed that I begged my parents to get me a snare drum so that I could be just like him. I listened to every Elvis record I could find, and tried to imitate the man who had impressed me so. I even bought an Elvis poster because Ron Tutt and his drums could be seen over Elvis' right shoulder!

Over the past several years I had lost track of Mr. Tutt and his playing. Then, in 1982, I picked up a copy of Neil Diamond's album *Heartlight*. To my surprise, there he was again: my favorite drummer with one of my favorite singers. I've been very fortunate to see Mr. Tutt play live on two different Neil Diamond tours since then, and every time I see him I'm totally amazed at his playing ability and style.

I would like to say a big "thank you" to Ron for inspiring me, and to *Modern Drummer* for featuring him. Ron, if you're ever in Denver, stop by so I can thank you in person.

Mike Eaton
Aurora CO

TOMMY'S RACK

In your recent Tommy Aldridge article [June '88 *MD*], reference is made to Tommy's drum rack being constructed by me from Sonor *Signature* hardware. That is incorrect. All bits and pieces, clamps, etc., were fabricated at my facility in Whittier, California from type 304 stainless steel, then mirror polished [and fitted] with aircraft

quality hardware (nuts, bolts, etc.). Tommy's rack uses 120 feet of stainless tubing.

I have also built racks for Rod Morgenstein (the one he used at the *Modern Drummer* Drum Festival last year), David Beal, Billy Cobham, Mickey Hart, Tony Thompson, Joe Franco, and several for Premier Percussion.

Greg Voelker
Whittier CA

Editor's note: Some of Tommy's hardware, including his hi-hat pedal and a couple of the cymbal stands that are hanging from the rack, are Sonor Signature series, and that seems to be the reason for the error. We apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

THANKS FROM ALEX

I would like to thank all the *Modern Drummer* readers for their support and for selecting me as their favorite Latin/Brazilian percussionist for the past two years [in the *MD Readers Poll*]. This award means a lot to me and encourages me to continue giving my best to the art.

Alex Acuna
Van Nuys CA

ON THE PERCUSSION SIDE

Some months ago my favorite magazine, *Modern Percussionist*, ceased publication. As I understand it, there was a merger of that magazine with yours.

I would like to commend you on your July issue, which has a good balance of

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articles devoted to the "rockers" and the "readers." Karen Pershing's article, Anthony Cirone's column, and the article on electronics in the symphony orchestra were very welcome.

I realize that you are in the business of selling magazines. I am sure there are more drumset players than symphony types who buy your publication. But I just wanted to let you know we appreciate any material that pertains to "classical" percussion.

Jack Rumbley
Timpanist-Percussionist
Fort Worth Chamber Orchestra and
Symphony
Fort Worth TX

THE WHOLE PACKAGE

Just a note of commendation for the *Club Scene* article, "The Whole Package" [June '88 MD]. I consider this to be an excellent and totally fulfilling article on electronic drums, etc. I only wish it came out about five years and a few thousand dollars back.

Before electronics was really "field-tested," there were a lot of "grey areas." I'm sure a lot of drummers, like myself, suffered a loss of cash and sanity trying to get the best reproduction of their electronically generated sounds. I know I went through a lot of speakers, bass amps, horns, etc. Then there was the challenge of getting used to hitting pads in front of you and hearing the sound beside or behind you! Then, after yelling at the sound man (because one couldn't "feel" the sound), before we knew it, a great "up and coming" band had disbanded. Somewhere down the road, I finally thought everything was happening—until I realized that some of my licks were not coming out exactly as I was hitting them. More equipment...more money, etc. And now I hear about "Simmons knees" or "Simmons wrist" syndromes...and yet enough cannot be said of electronic drums. Again, a great article, from a great magazine.

Michael O'Handley
E. Taunton MA

IT'S QUESTIONABLE RESPONSE

I would like to reply to a question raised by one of your readers in the *It's Questionable* department in the July issue (page 12, question 2). I believe the new *C-Ducer Drum Wizard* would be a solution to A.M.'s problem. Using his existing five-piece acoustic set and a *Drum Wizard*, he would be able to achieve the acoustic miked sound of his drums, as well as being able to trigger his *Pearl Drum-X* electronic brain. Additionally, he would be able to trigger sounds from any MIDI equipment and would not need a mic' mixer, since the *Drum Wizard* incorporates an 8-into-2 stereo mixer output. I hope this will be of interest to A.M. and other MD readers with problems of a similar nature.

Andre Walton
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Limitations

It is not a new concept that many of our limitations are self-imposed. I was once again made aware of this while reading an interview with the great musician Herbie Hancock. In the interview, Herbie states, "I realized I could never be a genius [jazz player] in the class of Miles, Charlie Parker, or John Coltrane. So I decided to forget about becoming a legend and just be satisfied to create some music to make people happy."

What strikes me most about this revealing comment is Herbie's honesty. It also shows a great deal of self-analysis and humility—particularly from someone who has played with so many great jazz artists and in so many styles. Yet, Herbie Hancock is probably one of the few musicians who could have made a living just playing pure jazz.

To some, it might seem like he gave up a dream. To me, Herbie is a great case of someone ridding himself of self-imposed limitations. For example, his album *Headhunters* is a funk classic, and his "Watermelon Man" and "Chameleon" tunes have reached a huge audience. (Buddy Rich recorded a high-powered version of the latter song.) Herbie has also written scores for such films as *Deathwish*, *A Soldier's Story*, *JoJo Dancer*, and, of course, *'Round Midnight*, which won him a number of awards.

That's a pretty impressive record for someone who gave up on becoming a legend! I think he achieved this kind of success by giving up his *limitations*. In other words, he became a *total* musician instead of purely a jazz musician. Don't misunderstand me; being any kind of a musician is a worthy goal, whether it be in jazz, classical, rock, or whatever. It's just that sometimes we may limit ourselves by taking too narrow a view of ourselves and of music.

Many of us become all-around players due to necessity. The need to make a living

means that, to one degree or another, we have to play music that people want to hear. So, most of us will play music that is popular at the time that we enter the playing scene.

In my own case, I became a studio musician to get away from endless road trips. Although I loved to play big band jazz, I wanted to be at home when my children were growing up. I couldn't make a living playing jazz without traveling. I also realized that I was not going to become a genius any time soon. This meant that I had to change my thinking.

Much to my surprise, I found studio work to be a great learning experience, because a studio drummer must be able to play many different types of music. The best example of this for young drummers is Ed Shaughnessy on the *Tonight Show*. Ed never knows what he will be expected to play from night to night.

I have met drummers who get stuck in a certain style and/or a certain place in time, and never update their thinking. This has been especially true for older jazz players. However, I encounter the same attitude with young rock drummers who only listen to one group or drummer, and spend time criticizing most other forms of music.

I have a friend who wanted to be a famous rock 'n' roll drummer. He carried his dream so far that when it didn't happen, he became very depressed. He is nearly 40 now, and he finally did give up on his dream a few years ago. Let me rephrase that: He didn't give up, he *adjusted* his goals. He made a real attempt to adopt a broader view of the music business. Today he is in real demand as a teacher, and he plays every week. He's raising a nice family, while still working to improve his drumming. And he plays *all* kinds of music, and is much, much happier.

Dreams are great, and they are usually what sustain us in the early years, when

the going is tough. However, music is always changing, the music business is always changing, and—believe it or not—we are always changing. In order to remain in the swim of things, we must grow, and growth means change. Growth is adjusting one's attitudes, goals, and concepts.

Looking at music as one vast opportunity is one way to shed limitations in your thinking. There are many kinds of music and many styles of drumming, all of which are valid. Even if you don't play jazz, or rock, or classical music, try to be aware of all of it to some degree. Go to a symphony concert and watch the percussion section. You might find it to be a great show, and you might even pick up some ideas for practice or performing.

I went to a heavy metal concert recently to see Megadeth and Dio. I didn't know all of the songs, but the power drumming of Vinny Appice was something to see and hear. Chuck Behler of Megadeth was also very good. It was a very stimulating experience, and I'm glad I went. At the very least I gained some idea as to what is happening in that style of music and drumming.

When I read the Herbie Hancock interview, I couldn't get over how much this man has done and *is* doing in music. He has a very broad view of music and moves easily from jazz to electric funk. Chick Corea, one of Herbie's close friends, is able to do the same thing. And Dave Weckl, the fine young drummer who plays with Chick Corea, has the same kind of ability, playing acoustic drums and yet embracing electronics.

Take a new look at yourself and see if your thinking is holding you back. If you feel it might be, try to be like Herbie Hancock. Don't worry about being a legend, just play some music to make people feel good. Who knows, then you just might become a legend, as Herbie Hancock truly has.

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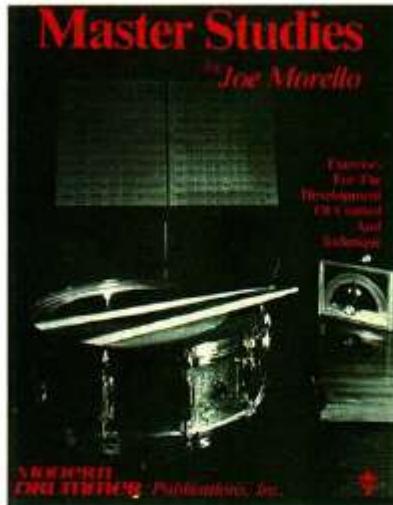
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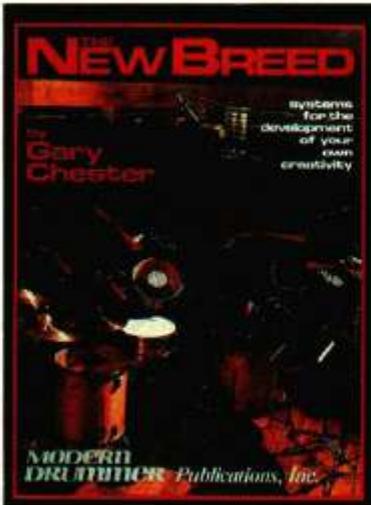
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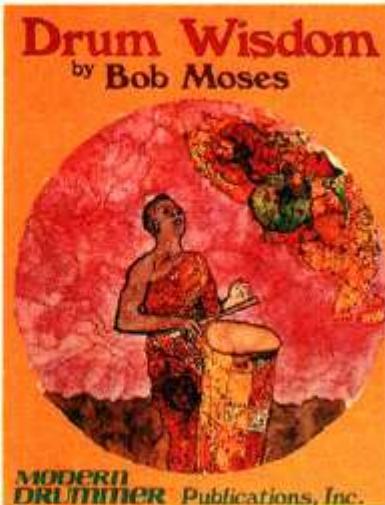
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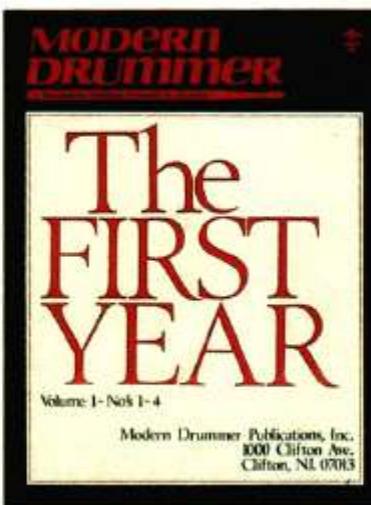
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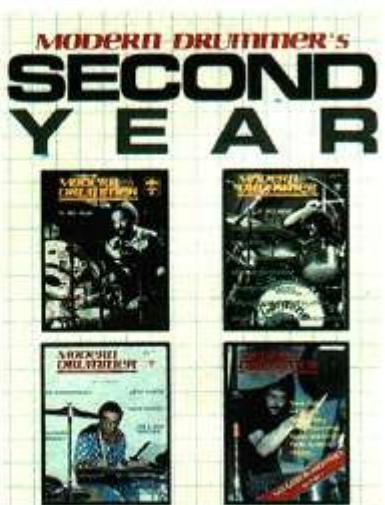
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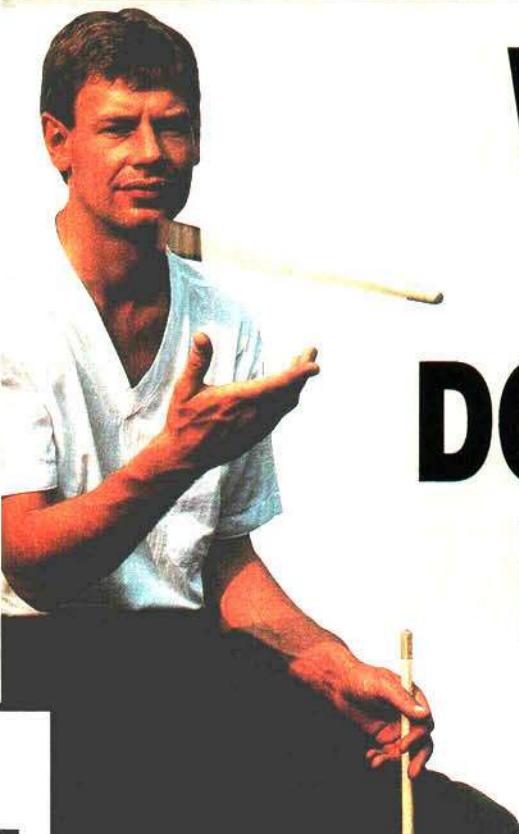
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How Much Do You Know?

When you play regularly in a club band, technical things usually go the way you expect them to. The frequency with which you perform serves to establish the best system in which to do things. The members of your band generally assume specific non-musical duties, and everybody eventually melds into a pretty efficient team. This is all to the good, because the process of setting up and breaking down is made much easier when everybody knows their job and just what is expected of them.

However, there is a down side to all this efficiency. What happens when somebody can't do their job? Suppose a band member is ill or injured, and can't make the gig—or must be late for some reason and so is unable to contribute to the setup? What happens if you can't handle your own setup or breakdown some night? Does this well-oiled machine fall apart?

Well, it certainly could, but it doesn't have to. There is a fairly simple solution to the problems I've brought up, and that is for everybody in the band to have at least a rudimentary knowledge of everybody else's job. Of course, I'm talking about the technical aspects, not the musical ones. No one expects anyone to be able to play everybody else's axe. But it is important that everyone know something about everybody else's equipment, along with how any mutually shared equipment (typically the P.A. system) is set up and controlled.

In most bands, one individual is responsible for the setting up and operation of the P.A. system. This may be an onstage band member, or a sound technician. No matter who it is, the rest of the band members should also have a thorough knowledge of how the system is assembled. They don't need to know *how* it works, or *why* a given cable goes where it does; they just need to know where and how everything connects together. The idea is for anyone in the band to be able to get the P.A. operational. From that point, hopefully, the regularly designated individual (or a qualified substitute) should be able to take over.

Learning how to put together a P.A. system is really little more than putting together a puzzle: Piece A fits into piece B, etc. All that is required is a clear diagram of the patching system, indicating where each mic' cable comes in, where each speaker cable goes out (and to which speaker box), and where each patch cable connects (and what it connects to). Beyond that, each band member should be familiar with the necessary cables, so as to be sure which are mic' cables, which are speaker cables, which are the appropriate patch

cables for each connection, etc. One way to make your patching system virtually fool-proof is to label each cable clearly with some sort of tag, and then label your patching diagram in a corresponding manner. (This would make things more convenient for your regular P.A. person, anyway!)

Setting up equipment in an emergency can go beyond the P.A. system. Any given band member should have at least a rudimentary idea of how each individual's instrumental amps and speakers connect, and how that player likes his or her equipment to be arranged. When it comes to fancy patches for a multi-keyboard player, a diagram might once again be the answer if an emergency setup is called for. At the very least, every band member should be able to get the keyboard (or boards) set up on the appropriate stands, connected to the appropriate amp/speaker setup, and powered up. If the patching is too fancy for anyone else to do, that will simply have to wait until the keyboard player can do it.

The same goes for guitar and bass set-ups. Any band member should be able to get the amps and speakers in place, connected, and powered. If the guitar or bass player uses an elaborate pedal or effects setup, that may have to wait until he or she arrives. If a sub is coming in, chances are that that person will be bringing in his or her own, so your band members shouldn't have to worry about them.

"Ah ha," you say. "But what about my drumkit? It's one thing for me to learn how to set up the P.A., but how can I expect other members of my band to set up my drums the way I want them if I need to come late some night myself? My kit is much too personal; it's more than just connecting up some patch cords!" Of course, you can't expect your bandmates to set your drums up perfectly for you. But with a little prior planning on your part, you can make it possible for them to get your kit within 90% of where you need it to be, thereby making it possible for you to come screaming in at the last minute, make a few adjustments, and get on with the first set. (You can always fine-tune as you proceed through the night.)

As we all know, this is the age of the memory-lock. It shouldn't be difficult for anyone to put your drum stands together if they are clearly marked as to what part connects with what other part. This is just a matter of color coding, numerical I.D. tags, or some other identifying system. Most drummers I know do this for themselves anyway; just make sure that your bandmates know your coding system. As far as which drums and cymbals go on which

stands, this is another situation in which a simple diagram would tell all. Just draw an overhead view, showing where you want your drums and cymbals to be placed. (Make sure to show each of your bandmates how your drum mounting system works, and how you wish your cymbals to be placed on their respective stands.) If you happen to use a drum rack, be sure to explain how the rack itself sets up, and then use your diagram to indicate which stand section fits into which clamp on the rack.

Again, I stress that these measures are taken against the possibility of an emergency. In such a case, everybody has to remain flexible and make the best of things. Your drums may not be in tune, and you might be a bit uncomfortable until you can personally set them straight, but at least the gig will be able to start as soon as you arrive, rather than being delayed while you are setting up the drums after arriving late.

The bottom line to all of this is that today's equipment is getting more and more sophisticated. As a result, the musicians who use that equipment are turning into specialists. While this specialization works to a band's advantage musically, it can definitely be a detriment technically. In order to overcome this detriment, a band must take appropriate steps to overcome the "mystery" element in each other's equipment, and to make it (relatively) simple for each member to cover each other member, should the need arise.

Having said all that, I'd like to relate a short anecdote that serves to illustrate two things: First, it underscores the importance of knowing something about other people's jobs in your band. Second, it proves that even when you think you know everything there is to know about club work, you may still be surprised.

This past weekend, my band was scheduled to play, as usual. Our bass player, who normally handles the setup and control of our P.A. system, had planned a vacation for the week prior to the gig. He gave us plenty of notice, mentioning that he would be flying in on the day of the gig and might be forced to arrive at the club at the last minute. We all felt it wise to distribute the equipment he normally carries among the rest of the band members, so that we could get it to the gig and have it set up without his having to be there. At this point we realized that none of the rest of us really knew the patching system that was employed for the P.A. (a fact that prompted this entire column), so the bass player created a diagram and gave it to me. Since I normally got to the gig early to set

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up my drums, it was decided that I would take the P.A. board, amps, and effects. Our reasoning was that I could set up my drums first, and then cable up the P.A. The speakers would come with other members, but all that had to happen with them was to mount them on their stands and plug them in.

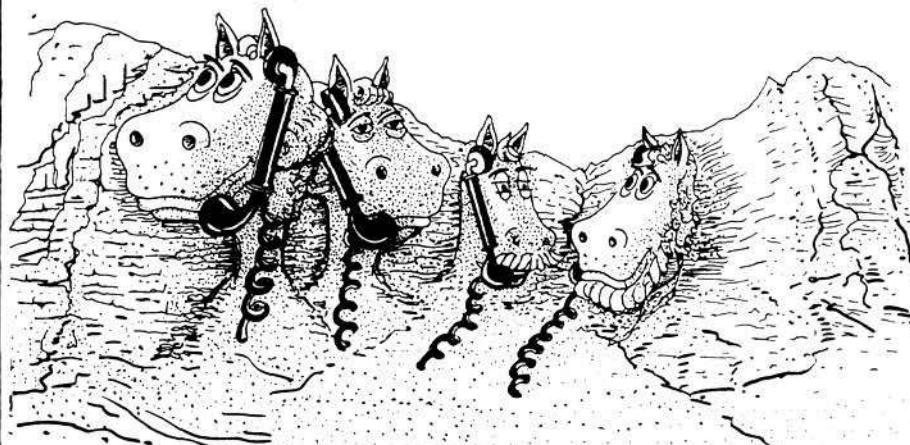
We felt very clever and proud of ourselves for all of this prior planning. And, in fact, much of the planning worked out perfectly. However, we did make one classic error: We forgot that the P.A. board and amps stacked up on the bass player's speaker cabinet. I was unable to carry that cabinet along with my drums and the extra equipment I was already taking. Consequently, when I finished setting up my drums and dutifully got out the diagram to begin patching in the P.A., I realized that it would be useless to do so. There were two small, but heavy, racks full of amps and electronic effects, along with a separate mixing board—and no final place to put them. It would have been fruitless to patch them in on the ground and then try to place them on the bass cabinet when it arrived, because the two racks and the board—when connected by all the patch cables—would have been impossible to lift into place. Something would have been dropped, tom loose, or in some other way damaged. I simply had to wait until the rest of the band got to the gig (some 45 minutes later) with the bass cabinet before I could realistically begin the patching.

All of this goes to show that when planning to cover someone else's tasks in a band, you have to make sure that every detail is accounted for. Had I been able to carry the bass cabinet, I could have had the P.A. ready to go when the band arrived. Perhaps some of my own equipment (which I could certainly have set up rapidly) could have been carried by someone else, while I carried all of the pieces necessary to make the P.A. setup work. Extraordinary circumstances call for some extraordinary measures—which generally only amount to a little extra forethought. In a way, I'm rather glad this minor debacle happened the way it did. It was a humbling experience, serving to remind me that after 20 years in clubs, I still don't know it all.



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MD TRIVIA CONTEST WINNER

The MD Trivia Contest in the June issue offered two prizes, and so there are two winners. A pair of DW/5000 Turbo bass drum pedals and one DW5500 Turbo hi-hat will go to both **Mike Calisa**, of Parksville, British Columbia, Canada, and **William Ash**, of Brooklyn, New York. These drummers' cards were the first two drawn at random with the correct answer to June's trivia question. That question was: Name the drummer who once threw a cymbal at Charlie Parker because he didn't like the way Parker was playing. That drummer was the inimitable **Papa Jo Jones**.

Congratulations to Mike and William from Drum Workshop, Inc. and *Modern Drummer*.

IN MEMORIAM: DANNIE RICHMOND

The jazz world knew Charles D. (Dannie) Richmond as an inspirational drummer who always kept his bandmates on their toes with his cascades of fresh ideas. Musicians and audiences will miss this inspiration who died of a heart attack earlier this year in New York City. Born in New York, Richmond's first musical pursuit was the tenor sax. He played in rock 'n' roll bands as a teenager, but found his unique musical voice when he switched to drums.

Richmond gained acclaim as a member of Charles Mingus' group between 1956 and 1970. After participating in several free-lance projects, including a stint with Chet Baker, he later rejoined Mingus, providing provocative drumming up until the bassist's death in 1979. Dannie helped spread Mingus' good work (with the help of other Mingus alumni) as a member of the Mingus Dynasty band. He also found time to lead and record

with his own quartet.

During the early '70s, Richmond also ventured into rock with a three-year membership in the Mark Almond Band, dates with Joe Cocker, and a tour with Elton John. In 1979, Dannie teamed up with pianist Don Pullen, saxophonist George Adams, and bassist Cameron Brown, forming a quartet that proved to be one of the most exciting of his career. It was a perfect vehicle for his spontaneous approach to drums. Several other projects sprouted on the side, including work with the Lew Tabackin Trio and Benny Wallace. But the Pullen/Adams group remained Dannie's mainstay for over eight years, up until the time of his death.

"Dannie was a very passionate person, and that was reflected in his playing," commented Cameron Brown, Dannie's close friend and colleague in the Pullen/Adams quartet. "He was also a very warm and very funny person who always kept the band laughing."

Richmond was as adept at handling highly abstract musical ideas as he was at getting down to a gritty blues shuffle. He will always be remembered as a player who sought to take risks with his drumming and stretch the boundaries of rhythmic/ melodic interplay within a group. He is survived by his wife, Juanita, and daughter, Tamia.

—Jeff Potter

DRUMSET EVALUATIONS AT PASIC

Drumset players attending the Percussive Arts Society International Convention (PASIC '88) will have a unique opportunity to have their playing evaluated by a notable drumset artist. Peter Erskine, Danny Gottlieb, Joe Morello, Ed Thigpen, Vinnie

Colaiuta, and Jim Chapin will be among the artists participating in this event, with other artists to be announced. Each drummer will meet with one of the artists for a 15-minute evaluation. The sessions will be open to the public, and will be conducted four hours a day on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. Sign-up sheets will be available at the PASIC registration desk, and will be handled on a first-come, first-served basis. There is no fee for this evaluation, but participants must be registered for the convention. Equipment is being provided by PASIC exhibitors, and the event is being coordinated by the PAS Jazz Committee and *Modern Drummer magazine*.

PASIC '88 is being held November 16-19 in San Antonio, Texas. For further information, contact the Percussive Arts Society, 214 West Main Street, Urbana, Illinois 61801.



PAUL REAL TO DISTRIBUTE WUHAN CYMBALS EXCLUSIVELY

Paul Real Sales has announced the signing of an agreement with the Wuhan Cymbal and Gong factory in China naming Paul Real as the exclusive importer and distributor of Wuhan *Lion* cymbals and *Chau* gongs. The signing climaxed a two-week trip to China, where Paul met with officials of the Wuhan factory, was briefed on the history of cymbal and gong making in China, and observed the manufacturing processes.

"We're very excited to be named the exclusive importer and distributor of the Wuhan cymbals and gongs," Real said. "There are many China-type cymbals on the market, but those who know, want Wuhan. And we'll now be able to provide a steady supply to the American market. This means that drummers will now be able to go into their favorite music store and see a complete selection of Wuhan cymbals and gongs."

DREW'S MUSIC NEW ROGERS WARRANTY AGENT

Al Drew's Music, in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, has been named the official warranty agent for all pre-1987 Rogers drum equipment by the Fender Musical Instrument company. (The Rogers name and designs, as applied to the manufacture of new drums, was purchased by Island Musical Supplies, of Staten Island, New York, in 1987.) Drew's Music has purchased the entire existing inventory of Rogers equipment from Fender, including all American-made drums, *Swiv-O-Matic* and *Memriloc* hardware, parts, accessories, heads, sticks, etc. The store has established a new division to handle new and used Rogers drums and accessories. According to store owner Al Drew, "This Rogers inventory, combined with our expert staff that has been handling Rogers equipment since 1960, will enable us to maintain any of the existing Rogers drums, as well as providing service to any of the new *R-360*, *R-380*, and *Memriloc* sets that are still available."

Further information may be obtained by writing Al Drew's Music, 526 Front Street, Woonsocket, Rhode Island 02895. The store may also be reached by phone at (401) 769-3552 or 766-4871 between the hours of 1:00 and 9:00 P.M. Eastern Standard Time.



MAGIC TOUCH

Few bands have influenced rock 'n' roll in the 70's and 80's the way Aerosmith has. Their unique blend of British styling and American drive has made them one of the most popular bands ever to emerge in this country.

From their inception, Joey Kramer has provided the raw power and pure emotion that has kept Aerosmith a vital force in rock 'n' roll. Joey's passion for drumming has taken him further in the last 20 years than most musicians will go in a lifetime. It's this insight into the world of drumming that has led Joey to Tama Artstar II.

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PHOTO BY: GENE KIRKLAND

ZILDJIAN EXPANDS FACTORY

The Avedis Zildjian Company recently announced a program to dramatically expand the capacity of their Norwell, Massachusetts manufacturing facility. According to company President Armand Zildjian, "This is the most significant investment this company has made since we moved to this new facility in 1972. Our philosophy is to preserve the old-world craftsmanship, yet make our production as efficient as possible. We will be able to raise our quality standards even higher and increase our levels of production at the same time. This will mean even faster delivery to our dealers."

Much of the investment is in capital equipment, involving many engineering design innovations. Most important among the new equipment is a state-of-the-art gas-fired rotary type hearth. According to Jim Roberts, Zildjian Executive Vice President, "This new hearth permits tight controls over the consistency of heat being applied to the cymbal castings during the basic heating and rolling stages. This will dramatically increase our yields at this level. Most importantly, we will be able to spend more time on, and train more people in, the truly skilled areas of hammering and lathing."

Chris Noblett, Sales & Marketing Vice President, cites industry statistics supporting the growth of the percussion industry in recent years. "The latest information from the American Music Conference shows that the U.S. domestic percussion category grew by 12% in 1987 over 1986, passing the \$100 million level for the first time. Our own sales confirm that growth."

Armand Zildjian adds, "We have an urgent need to fulfill the huge world demand for Zildjian cymbals. There's no shortcut to making a Zildjian, but our modern factory allows us to do it on a much larger scale and to a much higher level of quality and consistency."

JOHNSTON NEW PURE-CUSSION VP

Bruce Carlson, President of PureCussion (manufacturer of RIMS Drum Mounts and PureCussion Drums) recently announced that Walt Johnston, former President of Pearl International, has joined PureCussion as Vice President. "We are pleased to have Walt join our team at this critical period in our growth," stated Bruce. "Walt brings tremendous credibility and experience to PureCussion and is, in a way, our proof statement that we're serious about being a major force in the drum industry as well as the percussion accessory market with our RIMS Drums Mounts."

Long an advocate of the RIMS system, Walt stated, "While unable to offer RIMS Drum Mounts as standard equipment on Pearl drums, it was obvious that the major Pearl endorseees and knowledgeable pro drum shops overwhelmingly requested their kits be made to accept RIMS Mounts. In this stage of its development, PureCussion is a young, vibrant, and aggressive company with some in-demand products. I look forward to being a part of it and helping guide its rapid growth."

FIBES DRUM-STICKS ACQUIRED FROM MARTIN GUITARS

Thomas Kearns has acquired Fibes Drumsticks from the C.F. Martin Guitar Company. The drumsticks will continue to be sold under the Fibes trademark by Fibes, Inc.

Fibes will now be based in New Jersey and will continue to supply a wide variety of select hickory drumsticks through wholesale distributors under a new logo. C.F. Martin will continue to be a distributor of Fibes.

of Fibes.

Thomas Kearns was president of a management and consulting firm specializing in manufacturing productivity. He brings a strong background of general management and consulting expertise to Fibes.

SIMON GARDNER MANAGING DIRECTOR OF SONOR (U.K.) LTD.



Horst Link and Steve Gardner, current Directors of Sonor (U.K.) Ltd., recently announced the appointment of Simon Gardner to the Board of Directors in the role of Managing Director. Although only 24 years of age, Simon has distinguished himself academically and musically, achieving an honors degree in economics and philosophy from the London School of Economics, while maintaining his musical career playing with various professional artists on European tours, records, etc.

Sonor (U.K.) Ltd. also distributes Sabian cymbals and Yorkville Sound amplification, and it is felt by these manufacturers that the presence of someone of Simon's age, enthusiasm, and knowledge can only be of great importance in helping the company to grow in the future.

SABIAN DAY

May 1 was Sabian Day on Long Island, New York. Five Sabian artist/clinicians were on

hand at the American Legion Hall in Seaford, Long Island to inspire, instruct, and, above all, play! Clinician/drummer Dom Famularo hosted the festivities, which were co-sponsored by the Long Island Drum Center.

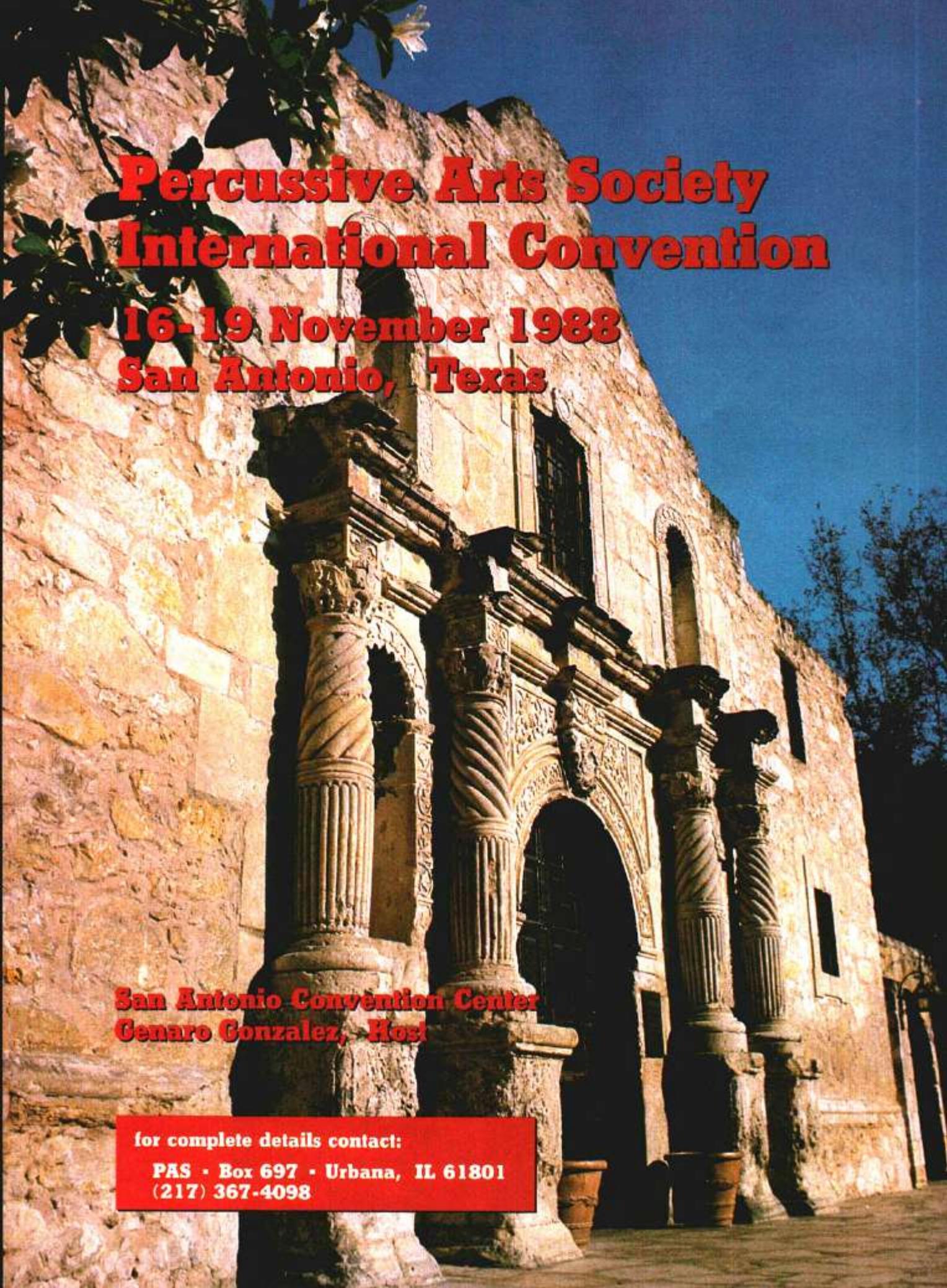
Rick Latham kicked things off to a rousing start, setting the pace for the entire day. Zeroing in on the teaching aspects of his book, *Advanced Funk Studies*, Latham both discussed and displayed tips on how to keep solid time, as well as the application of rudiments on the drumset.

Although Jeff Watts had originally been scheduled to appear, he couldn't attend due to recording commitments. His last-minute replacement was Bernard Purdie, whose presence more than sufficiently filled the void. The veteran player shared some of his studio secrets with the youthful crowd, and even his subtler techniques were not lost on the 10- and 11-year-old drummers who were present. Overall, crowd response to Purdie was extremely enthusiastic.

Next up was Jim Chapin, who was greeted with a standing ovation. Chapin demonstrated the Sanford Moeller hand-conditioning technique while the audience followed along with the exercises on practice pads. Chapin's setup was unique, in that his bass drum was situated far off to his left side, and was played via a left-lead double pedal.

Brothers Vinnie and Carmine Appice rounded out the lineup in a collaborative effort. They started things out with an opening spot where each soloed in rotation, followed by a section where the two played together. Then came an extended solo from each player, followed by a question-and-answer period. This format served to demonstrate the contrast in each drummer's playing skills: Carmine delivered a display of wicked funk grooves, while Vinnie presented a more heavy rock style. Carmine also illustrated his technique for hitting the toms with extra attack via a rimshot. Overall, the Appice brothers presented a well-rehearsed and informative clinic.

—Teri Saccone



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SIMMONS TRIXER

Simmons Electronics recently introduced a new device for reinforcing the sound of acoustic drums called the *Trixer*. Housed in a single, rack-mountable case, the *Trixer* consists of four clearly definable areas:

1. Four "kits" of drum samples are on board, each containing bass, snare, and four toms. The sounds can be individually tuned, and further "kits" can be accessed through sound memory cards.

2. Simmons has developed a new circuit for triggering from acoustic drums. Called "Learn," it actually samples the trigger profile of a miked or bugged acoustic drum and automatically computes the correct signal processing for the most accurate and dynamic triggering of the sound samples.

3. An on-board mixer enables the drummer to blend the sound of the miked acoustic drum with the digital sound to create a reinforced drum sound. A stereo mix of this sound can then be sent to a P.A. board.

4. The *Trixer* also features a 16-bit digital reverb to further enhance the reinforced drum sound.

A MIDI interface is also included for those drummers who wish to trigger the sounds of drum machines and

samplers from their acoustic drums. For further information, contact Simmons Electronics USA, 23917 Craftsman Road, Calabasas, California 91302, or call 1-800-TECDRUM.

NEW ZILDJIAN CYMBALS

Zildjian is now offering two new cymbals: the *EFX Piggyback* and a 22" *K Custom* model. The *EFX Piggyback* is designed to be used in conjunction with other cymbals to produce a variety of special effects sounds. The cymbal is available in 12" size only. It is very thin, with a round bell and a turned-up edge similar in profile to Zildjian's Swish cymbals. This size and shape is the result of extensive field testing and discussions with various top drummers.

The *EFX Piggyback* can be used in a number of ways. It can be placed inverted inside



an inverted *China Boy* or *Swish* cymbal separated by felt. In this position, the *EFX Piggyback* enhances the intrinsic "trashy" sound of the cymbal and reduces the overall decay to produce a much shorter, sharper "China sound." Alternatively, it can simply be rested the right way up on top of a crash or ride cymbal. This combination again produces a very distinctive "trashy" sound. Two sounds are readily available to the drummer, by striking either the edge of the bottom cymbal or the *EFX Piggyback* itself. Other ideas have been experimented with, and Zildjian's Marketing Manager, Colin Schofield, is quick to

add, "The *EFX Piggyback* actually sounds incredible on its own, producing a unique, high-pitched sharp China sound."

New to Zildjian's *K Custom* series is a 22" model. (The series had previously only been available in 16", 18", and 20" sizes.) Designed primarily as a ride cymbal, the 22" model combines both hand and machine hammering with an unlathed surface. The result, according to Zildjian, is very clean stick definition (a characteristic of a thick cymbal) along with a warm, shimmering undertone (a characteristic of a thin cymbal). Colin Schofield states, "When played forcefully, the 22" *K Custom* generates more volume and has a 'bigger' overall sound than that of the other *K Customs*. However, when played more gently, the cymbal's beautiful, darker and more mellow overtones become more prominent...the type of sound that many players would use in a jazz trio setting." For more information, contact Avedis Zildjian Company, 22 Longwater Drive, Norwell, Massachusetts, 02061.

NEW PRODUCTS FROM YAMAHA

Yamaha has recently been active in the introduction of new concert- and marching-percussion products, along with intro-



ducing a new entry-level drumset line and expanding its library of sounds for the *D8* series of electronic percussion.

For mallet percussionists, Yamaha is now offering the *YV 3400* and *YV 2600* vibes. Both instruments are three-octave vibes featuring aluminum alloy tone bars. The bars and resonators of the *YV 3400* are finished in glossy gold; those on the *YV 2600* are in silver satin. The *YV 3400* features adjustable regulator caps for the resonators in the lower octave to allow players to adjust for acoustics in different playing venues. The variable-speed motor offers a touch-pause system. According to Yamaha, this system eliminates click noises when the fan is turned on or off during performance. The fan can also be stopped at a predetermined point with total accuracy. The *YV 3400* incorporates a folding rail frame that is height-adjustable. The *YV 2600* does not include the folding frame, nor does it feature the lower octave resonator regulators.

In the area of marching percussion, Yamaha now offers a variety of new stands and percussion accessories. The *MTS 3* and *MTS 4* are stands designed to effectively support Yamaha trio or quad toms mounted on Yamaha carriers during rehearsal situations, while the *MQAT 5* Marching Quint Carrier Attachment allows a 6" marching tom to be added to a quad setup to create a quint. A new line of gray molded polyethylene cases

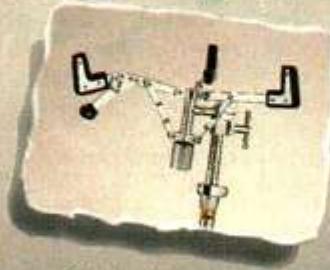


PEARL'S NEW HEAVY ARTILLERY

THE 950 SERIES HARDWARE



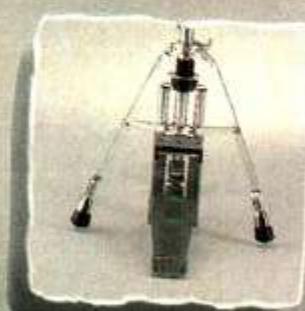
By far the largest diameter tubes we've used, creating the tallest, heaviest and sturdiest stands we've ever made.



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for marching drums is now available, featuring heavy duty straps and hardware. Finally, all Yamaha marching bass drums will now be fitted with *Sound Impact Strips*, to eliminate unwanted overtones.

In the field of concert percussion, the 65 112 and BS 412 are bass drum stands designed for easy portability and use either indoors or outdoors. The 65 412 is fitted with casters, brakes, and a footrest.

For entry-level drumset players, Yamaha has introduced the *Power Vseries* drumkit. The drums feature nine-ply shells made in England of Phillipine mahogany, using Yamaha's Air Seal System. The drums are available with outer coverings of jet black, winter white, mirror chrome, and Italian red. The insides are finished with clear lacquer. Hardware includes a new FP 725 bass drum pedal and an HS 820 hi-hat (both featuring lightweight foot pedals) and a new TH 80W Tom Holder. Drum sizes available are 10x10, 10x12, 11x13, and 12x14 rack toms, 16x16 and 16x18 floor toms, 16x22 and 16x24 bass drums, and a 6 1/2x14 metal snare.

For electronic drummers, Yamaha has introduced four new Waveform ROM cartridges to expand the musical capabilities of the *D8* Electronic Percussion System. The *WRC01* cartridge offers Latin sounds, DX synthesizer voices, special sound effects, and vocal sounds. The *WRC02* cartridge features 25 sounds created for contemporary jazz and fusion applications. These include a wide variety of bass drum, snare, and tom-tom sounds, along with rhythm guitar, fingered bass, cowbell, and three hi-hats. The *WRC03* cartridge features heavy metal drum voicings for toms, snare drums, and bass drums, along with a picked bass and metal guitar sounds. The *WRC04* cartridge offers high-tech voicings of "processed" drum and synth bass sounds popular in contemporary dance music.

For further information on any Yamaha mallet or marching percussion item, contact



Yamaha Music Corp. USA, P.O. Box 7271 Grand Rapids, Michigan, 49510, or call 800-253-8490. For drumkits and electronic percussion, contact Yamaha Music Corp. USA, Drums, Guitars, Amplifiers Division, 6600 Orangethorpe Avenue, Buena Park, California, 90620, or call (714)522-9011.

NEW SABIAN CYMBALS

Sabian has recently introduced a new series of ride cymbals called *HH Classic*, available in 20" and 22" sizes. According to the company, these new models were created in response to numerous drummers' requests for a ride cymbal that captured the cymbal sound popularized by the great drummers of the '40s, '50s, and '60s.

Nort Hargrove, Assistant Vice-President of Production, states, "The *HH Classic* is a highly musical cymbal. Intensive hand hammering of its high profile and large bell have produced a sound that is higher pitched than our standard *HH* models, but also highly focused. Its rich, full-bodied sound peaks within tonal parameters that are extremely tight. This means that each cymbal retains its own very specific voice regardless of the volume at which it is played."

In addition to the *HH Classic*, two other new listings to the Sabian catalog include 12" *Mini-Hats* (heavyweight cymbals said to offer substantial volume and cut in a size ideal for main or second hi-hat applications), and a 12" *Splash* in the 68 *Plus* series. Fur-

ther information can be obtained by writing Sabian Ltd., Meductic, New Brunswick, EOH 1LO, Canada.

LP JAMBLOCK

Latin Percussion recently introduced its *Jam Block*, a percussion device with a "cutting" wood sound, but made of a synthetic material (*Jenigor*) for extra durability. According to LP, it is the only product of its kind that's virtually indestructible. As a result, the company is offering a one-year limited warranty.

The shape of the *7am Block* is the essence of its sound. It has a raised striking surface for optimum performance, and three mounting locations for versatile positioning. A steel mounting bracket is included. For further information, contact Latin Percussion Inc., 160 Belmont Avenue, Garfield, New Jersey 07026, (201)478-6903.

BOZZIO AND FRANCO VIDEOS FROM DCI

DCI Music Video Inc. has produced the first-ever instructional video by Terry Bozzio. Sixteen hours of footage was edited to create the 60-minute videotape, including solos, technique analysis, equipment talk, and other items of interest.

"I didn't want this to be a 'play-the-greatest-hits/explain-the-greatest-hits'-type of video, like some instructional tapes," says Bozzio. "Instead, I went for the inspirational aspect. This tape has interesting drum performances and offers some insights on new techniques." The tape also goes over Terry's innovative drumkit, focusing on

some unusual percussive items that Terry has incorporated into his playing. The video, entitled *Terry Bozzio: Solo Drums*, will

be available in mid-September.

Also new to DCI's catalog is Joe Franco's *Double Bass Drumming*, a video textbook that details an easy-to-follow method for strengthening control and independence on double bass. The tape features on-screen music graphics and close-up shots of Joe's foot-



work. (This video was reviewed on its first release in the September, '85 issue of *Modern Drummer*.) Joe Franco is noted for his work with the Good Rats and Twisted Sister, and has recently recorded with Leslie West and Vinnie Moore.

ED THIGPEN BRUSHBY CALATO

Joe Calato, President and founder of Calato Manufacturing, announced that he has "recently completed the research and development of a unique drum brush designed for one of the masters of brush technique, Ed Thigpen." The brush is now available in music stores throughout the world.

The *Ed Thigpen Model* brush is made of special thermo-plastic wires held together in a flexible plastic handle, which allows the brush to mold to the player's hand—a breakthrough in comfort and control. The flexible plastic wires produce a clean, "pingy" sound on cymbals and a warm, mellow sound on drumheads. "Like all Regal Tip brushes," Calato said, "the *Ed Thigpen Model* was designed with quick wrist response in mind." For more information, write Calato, 4501 Hyde Park Boulevard, Niagara Falls, New York 14305.



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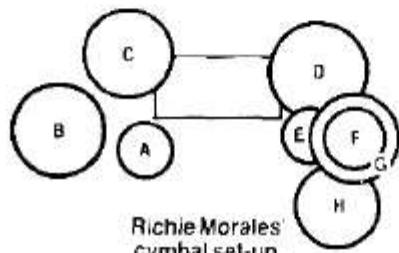
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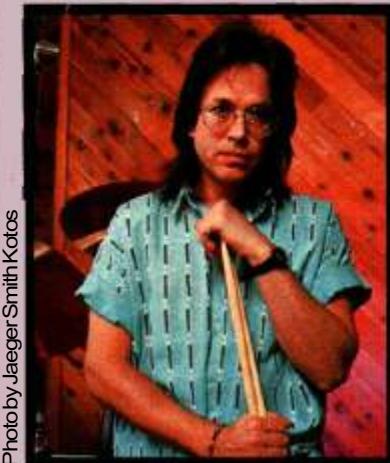
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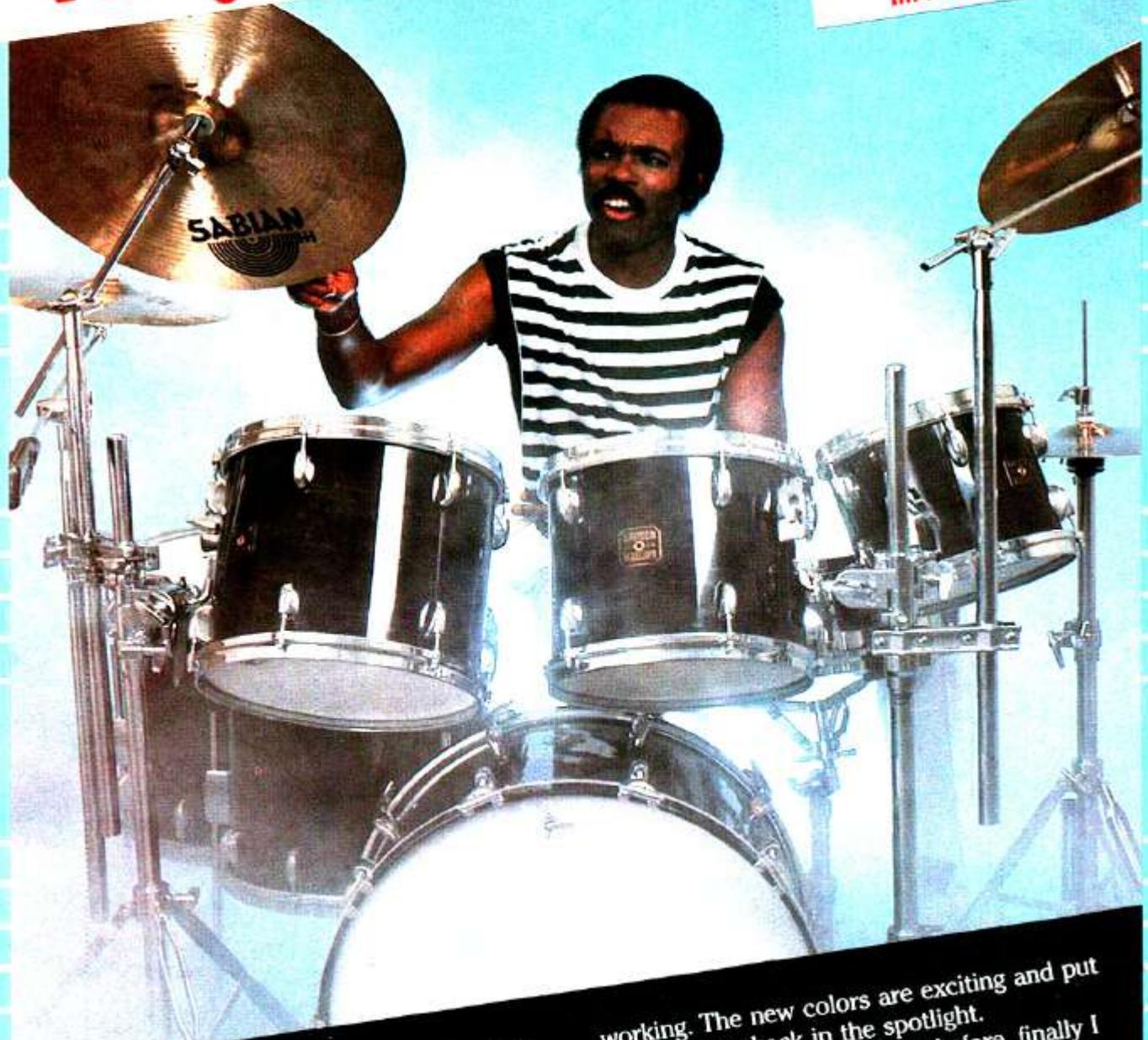
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